Will Eisner
COMIC INDUSTRY
AWARDS
WINNER

HARVEY AWARDS
WINNER

KAMOME
SHIRAHAMA

Witch Hat Atelier

VOLUME

8

KAMOME
SHIRAHAMA
Witch Hat
Atelier
VOLUME
8

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 41 ♦ 003

CHAPTER 42 ♦ 029

CHAPTER 43 ♦ 055

CHAPTER 44 ♦ 087

CHAPTER 45 ♦ 113

BONUS CHAPTER ♦ 147

WITCH HAT ATELIER

♦

KAMOME
SHIRAHAMA

Chapter 41

I WAS WONDERING IF...

...YOU WANTED TO HELP RUN A STALL AT SILVER EVE?

...RUNNING A *MAGIC* SHOP?!

YOU MEAN I'D BE...

...BUT THE SUN SET A LOT SOONER THAN I EXPECTED.

I EVEN HITCHED A RIDE ON A FARMER'S CART FOR PART OF THE WAY...

WELL, IT WAS STILL LIGHT WHEN I *LEFT* TOWN.

TARTAH!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ALONE SO LATE?!

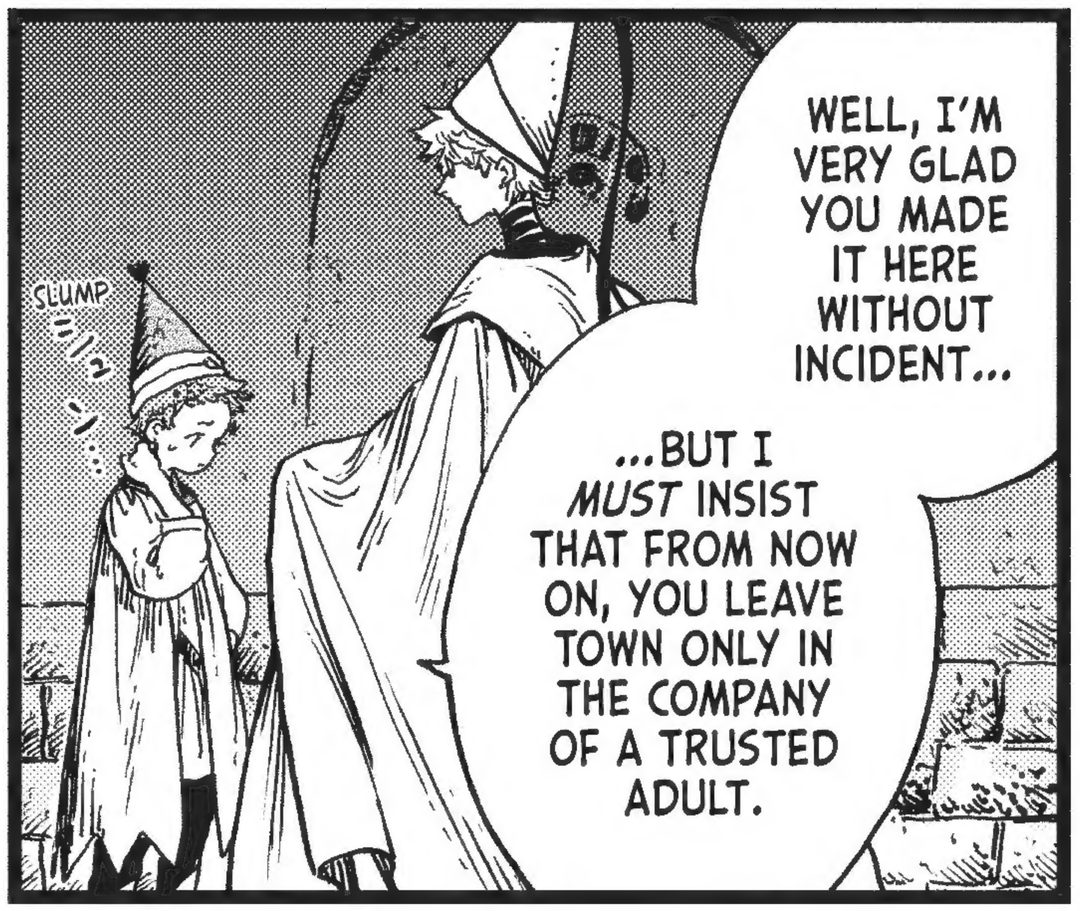
I MEAN, THE SKY'S FREE OF BEASTS AND BANDITS, RIGHT?!

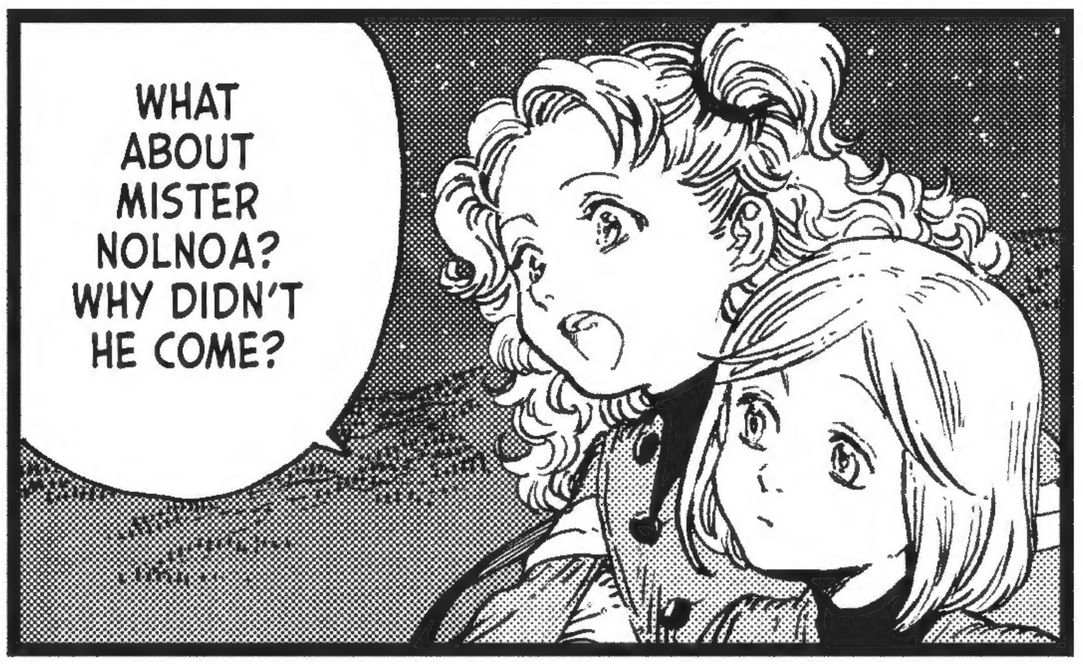
AS SOON AS I MADE IT TO THE DOWNS, THOUGH, I FLEW THE REST OF THE WAY HERE!

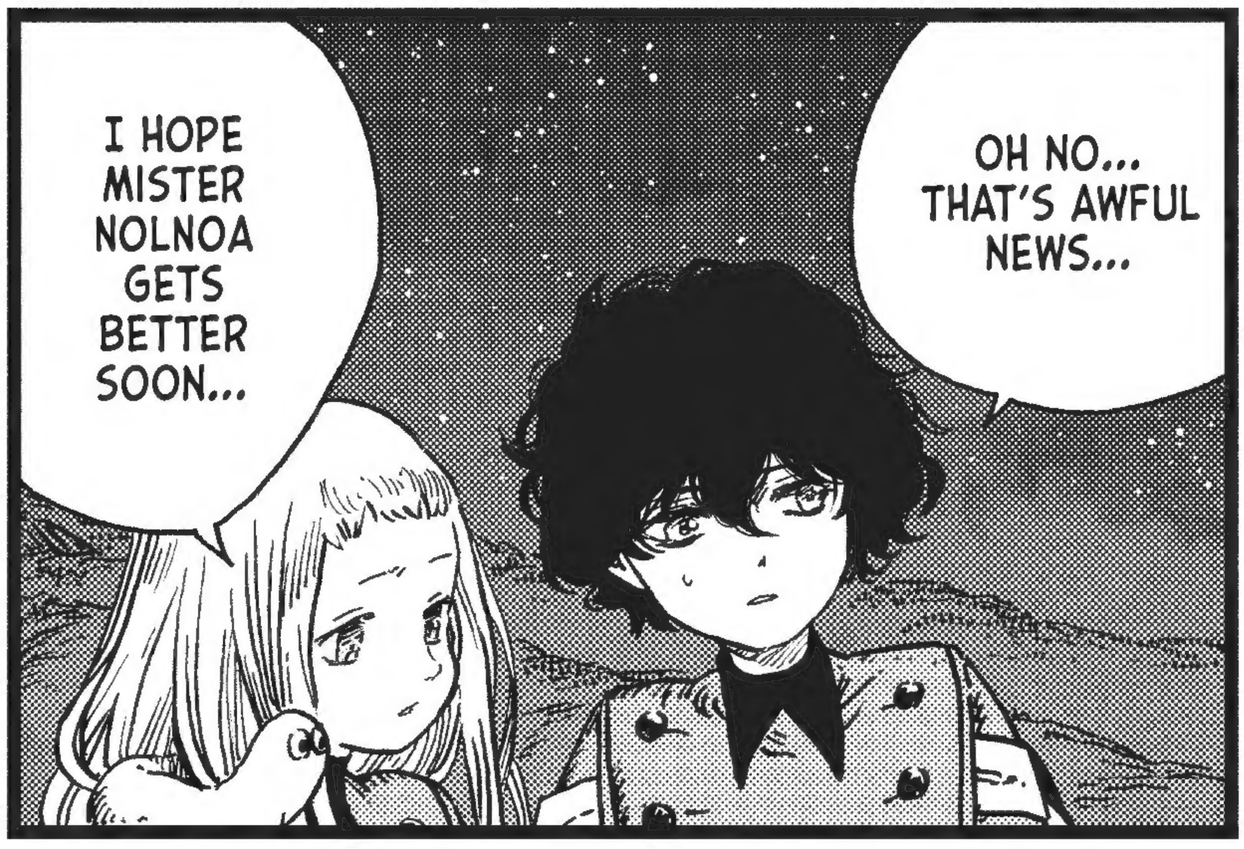
NOT EVEN THE SKY IS COMPLETELY SAFE, YOU KNOW.

I WATCHED A SCHOOL OF ASH-MOTTLED DRAGONS FLY RIGHT OVERHEAD AT DUSK.

No! Grandpa!
What are you doing?!
I told you I'd carry 'em!
GRM?!
KRKK
TRUTH IS, GRANDPA THREW OUT HIS BACK THE OTHER DAY.


SLUMP
WELL, I'M VERY GLAD YOU MADE IT HERE WITHOUT INCIDENT...
...BUT I *MUST* INSIST THAT FROM NOW ON, YOU LEAVE TOWN ONLY IN THE COMPANY OF A TRUSTED ADULT.


WHAT ABOUT MISTER NOLNOA? WHY DIDN'T HE COME?


I HOPE MISTER NOLNOA GETS BETTER SOON...
OH NO... THAT'S AWFUL NEWS...

...SO HE'S NOT EXACTLY IN SHAPE TO BE TAKING TRIPS...
HE'S SPENDING THE NIGHT IN THE HOSPITAL...

HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP? EVERYTHING OKAY AT THE STORE AND AT HOME?

BUT SETTING UP SHOP AT SILVER EVE IS ANOTHER STORY.

EVEN WITH GRANDPA AT HIS BEST, IT'D BE A LOT OF WORK FOR JUST...TWO OF US.

I'M FINE. IT'S NOT LIKE WE GET THAT MANY CUSTOMERS TO BEGIN WITH.

YOU SEE, COCO...

THE PENINSULAR SEAT?

THE PENINSULAR SEAT HAS WAAAY MORE PEOPLE THAN KALHN, AFTER ALL...

THINK OF IT LIKE A GREAT FAIR. A PLACE FOR WITCHES TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR MAGIC!

SILVER EVE IS HELD IN EZREST, THE CROWN CITY OF THE ZOZAH PENINSULA.

Ezrest, the Peninsular Seat

IT'S TRULY A THING TO BEHOLD. WITCHES FROM ACROSS THE LAND...

...SHOWING OFF THEIR FINEST WARES...

...UP FOR BARTER OR TRADE, AND ALL THE CITY'S STREETS LINED WITH TENTS IN EVERY COLOR IMAGINABLE!

SOON, IT BECAME A FESTIVAL IN ITS OWN RIGHT, AND THE TRADITION OF SILVER EVE WAS BORN!

...GREW INTO SOMETHING MORE AS TOWNSFOLK FLOCKED TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF MAGIC AND FROLIC IN THE STREETS.

...OR SHOWING OFF MYSTICAL PROWESS IN HOPE OF SECURING THE PATRONAGE OF THE ROYAL FAMILY...

WHAT BEGAN AS A MARKET FOR PEDDLING CONTRAPTIONS TO LORDS AND NOBLES...

TARTAH'S QUITE RIGHT TO BE ANXIOUS. WITHOUT MISTER NOLNOA'S HELP, RUNNING A SHOP WOULD BE A TALL ORDER INDEED.

TRAVELERS GATHER FROM ALL OVER FOR THE FOUR-DAY FESTIVAL.

TUP TUP TUP TUP TUP

...IS THAT WE GOT ONE OF THE BEST SPOTS IN THE DRAWING THIS YEAR.

YEAH. AND THE REAL SHAME...

GRANDPA WAS HOPPING UP AND DOWN WHEN HE HEARD THE NEWS. OUR LITTLE SHOP WOULD BE AT THE CENTER OF ATTENTION.

RIGHT IN THE CENTRAL SQUARE NEXT TO THE CASTLE GATES.

IT MEANS SO MUCH TO HIM. I REALLY DON'T WANT TO CANCEL...

TNK OO OOO

IT'S ONLY FOUR DAYS! REPRESENT THE STARRY SWORD AT SILVER EVE WITH ME!

PLEASE! WON'T YOU TAKE TURNS HELPING RUN THE TENT?

I KNOW IT'S OUT OF NOWHERE, BUT...

...I DON'T HAVE ANYONE ELSE TO ASK.

BUT... WHY US?

FWIP

I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO WORK FOR FREE!

YOU CAN HAVE HALF THE TENT TO USE HOWEVER YOU LIKE!

GWIP ギュッ

...AND REALLY, YOU'RE THE ONLY WITCHES I KNOW.

I MEAN... I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND ANYONE TO APPRENTICE UNDER...

OH, TARTAH...

IT'S SURE TO HAVE A GREAT VIEW OF THE PARADE, TOO!

...TO RELAX DURING THE FESTIVAL, OR TO PUT YOUR CONTRAPTIONS UP FOR SHOW OR SALE.

IT CAN BE YOUR OWN PERSONAL SPACE...

TWITCH

TWITCH

TWITCH

AND WHAT ABOUT COCO? THIS'LL BE HER FIRST TIME, RIGHT?

...!

...IT COULD BE KINDA FUN. Y'KNOW, TO GO TOGETHER.

AND I WAS JUST THINKING...

I'VE... I'VE NEVER INVITED SOMEONE OUT TO SILVER EVE...

ZRSH

?!

CAREFUL. IF YOU TURN HIM DOWN, YOU'LL EARN YOURSELF *TEN* ANGRICHEH POINTS.

I'M WITH TETIA 100% ON THIS.

MASTER! CAN'T YOU SEE THAT TARTAH *NEEDS* US?!

WHAT KIND OF WITCHES WOULD WE BE IF WE REJECTED SOMEONE SEEKING OUR HELP?!

WATCH YOURSELVES. YOUR *REAL* THOUGHTS ARE LEAKING STRAIGHT FROM YOUR HEADS.

YEAH. WHAT'S THE WORD?

Running a stall at Silver Eve would be sooo much fun. I mean, can you even imagine? How could we possibly turn him down?!

WHAT DO YOU SAY?!

!

TUG

DEAR ME...

...

PLEASE, MASTER?

ARE YOU KIDDING?!

BESIDES, QIFREY'S GOT HIS ARM TO CONSIDER. HE'S STILL NOT IN TOP SHAPE.

HONESTLY, I'M DEBATING WHETHER WE OUGHT TO GO TO SILVER EVE AT ALL THIS YEAR.

I've got nightly meetings, and I gotta get started on my next orders, and then I gotta go around to say my hellos and talk with patrons. The list goes on and on. I'm exhausted just *thinking* about it.

WELL, *I* DON'T HAVE TIME TO LOOK AFTER YOU KIDS. MY HANDS ARE ALREADY FULL.

BUT...!

RUNNING A SHOP *WOULD* BE QUITE THE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL OF YOU.

BUT...

HOORAY!!

Here we go again...

AND WITH A TENT TO REST AND REGROUP...

...I SUPPOSE I WON'T HAVE NEARLY AS MUCH TO WORRY ABOUT.

SO YOU'LL DO IT?!

YES. LET'S ALL LEND TARTAH A HAND.

DID YOU HEAR?! WE'RE GONNA BE STATIONERS FOR THE STARRY SWORD DURING SILVER EVE!!

GREAT. THE BIGGEST EVENT OF THE YEAR.

AND IF SO, I'VE GOT A LOT TO GET DONE...

*IT'S NOT HARD TO IMAGINE WHO **ELSE** WILL SHOW UP.*

OH...

THANK YOU. I'M SORRY TO BE A BOTHER.

WELL, THEN...

GIVEN THE HOUR, TARTAH, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO INSIST YOU SPEND THE NIGHT.

I'M SURE YOU'RE ANXIOUS TO CHECK IN ON MISTER NOLNOA. I'LL SEE YOU BACK TO TOWN TOMORROW.

HUH?!

REALLY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO.

SO, UH...

...I'D GREATLY APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULDN'T TREAT ME LIKE A CHILD.

I'M PERFECTLY ABLE TO GET HOME ON MY OWN WHEN IT'S LIGHT OUT.

Whoa... Beldaruit the Wise?

IT USED TO IRK ME TO NO END.

THAT'S A SENTIMENT I RECOGNIZE. WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE, MASTER BELDARUIT INSISTED ON FOLLOWING ME EVERYWHERE.

HAH! MY, MY...

We can't have you sneaking off again!

TSK!

Now, now! None of that!

BUT NOW THAT I CAN SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT COIN...

IT IS THE SURROUNDING WORLD IN WHICH THEY LACK FAITH.

TRUST ME WHEN I SAY THE ADULTS IN YOUR LIFE HAVE NO WISH TO DISCOUNT YOU.

IT'S PART OF THE PACKAGE, SO I'D BE MUCH OBLIGED IF YOU COULD HUMOR IT.

AND IF YOU'D LIKE MY HELP FOR SILVER EVE...

...I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE TO ACCEPT MY TENDENCY TO WORRY.

FINE. I GET IT.

A...

TMP

COME HERE! I WANNA SHOW YOU SOMETHING!

HEY, TARTAH!

WOW. SO THIS IS YOUR DESK?

I GUESS THIS MUST BE WHERE YOU PRACTICE YOUR SPELLS AND STUFF.

YUP!

WHOA!

I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW STRAIGHT THESE LINES ARE!

Look at them!

No way!

HEHE! HOW KIND OF YOU TO NOTICE!

WHEN YOU'RE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE GOOD LINES, IT SHOWS THAT YOU'VE SPENT A LOT OF TIME TRAINING YOUR *EYES!*

THAT'S WHAT MASTER SAYS!

IT MUST BE REAL NICE... I MEAN...

HAVING A MASTER AND ALL.

WITH TALENT LIKE YOURS, I'M SURE IT'LL BE A CINCH TO FIND SOMEONE!

I CAN'T WAIT UNTIL SOMEONE TAKES ME ON AS AN APPRENTICE.

YEAH... I DUNNO ABOUT THAT...

I'm not sure we'd be a good fit...

HEY! WHAT ABOUT MASTER QIFREY?

HUH?

I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD ASK YOU A FAVOR. I WANNA KNOW ABOUT YOUR GRIP. HOW TIGHTLY YOU HOLD YOUR PEN AND STUFF.

IT'LL HELP ME DECIDE ON THE RIGHT SHAPE AND WEIGHT FOR THE ONE I PROMISED YOU.

HEY! THAT REMINDS ME!

SURE! I CAN DO THAT!

JUST IMAGINE MY INDEX FINGER IS YOUR WAND...

...AND USE IT TO DRAW A SEAL ON THE GROUND LIKE YOU NORMALLY WOULD.

SO, UM...

IT'LL BE EASIER FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND IF I'M OVER HERE.

WAIT! HANG ON!

HOW ABOUT...

LET'S SEE... I'M RIGHT HANDED, SO...

I GUESS I GO LIKE THIS?

UM!

GASP! はっ!

IS THIS HELPING? CAN YOU FEEL IT?

UH! YEAH! I'M...!

ALL RIGHT. HERE I GO.

I'M DRAWING A SEAL.

...

BA-DUMP

GEEZ. OKAY, HER GRIP IS PRETTY TIGHT, AND...

...SHE'S GOT A TENDENCY TO BALL UP HER FIST, AND...

AUGH! WHY IS IT SO HARD TO **FOCUS**?!

LIKE THIS?

Y- YEAH.

PERFECT.

GLANCE
?
HUH? IS SOMETHING WR—
OH, WOW...
KDNK

AH. TARTAH. THERE YOU ARE.

TH-THANKS...

I'LL HEAD DOWN NOW.

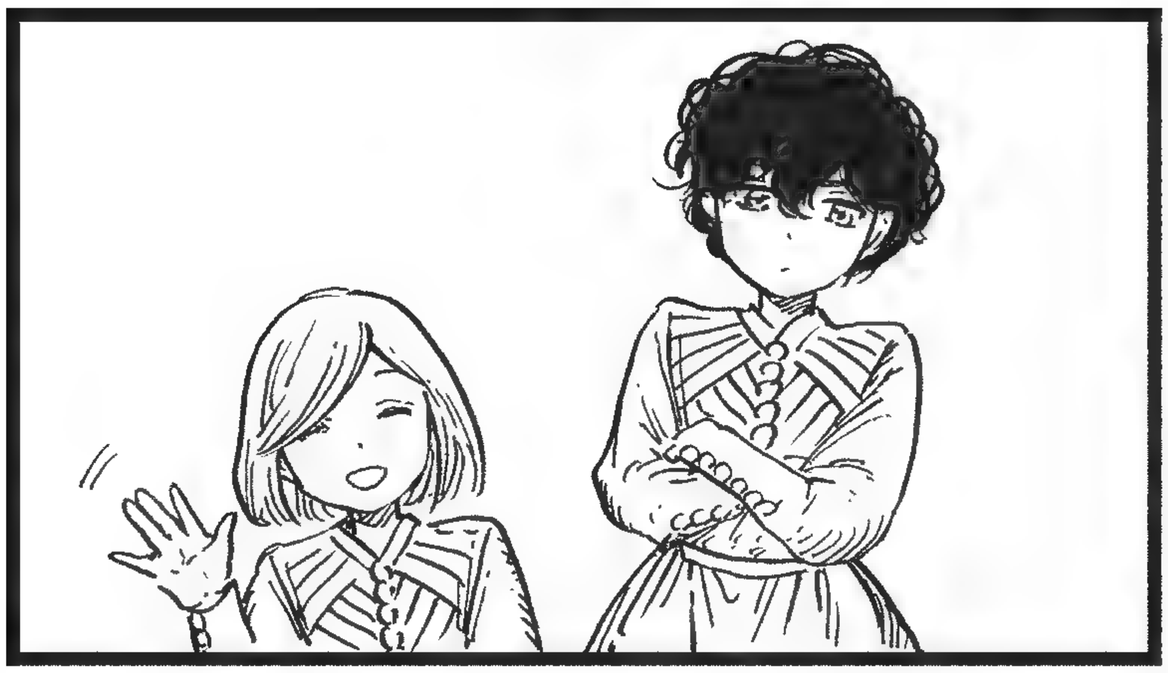
AND HERE'S A CHANGE OF CLOTHES.

MASTER QIFREY LAID A MAT OUT IN FRONT OF THE HEARTH.

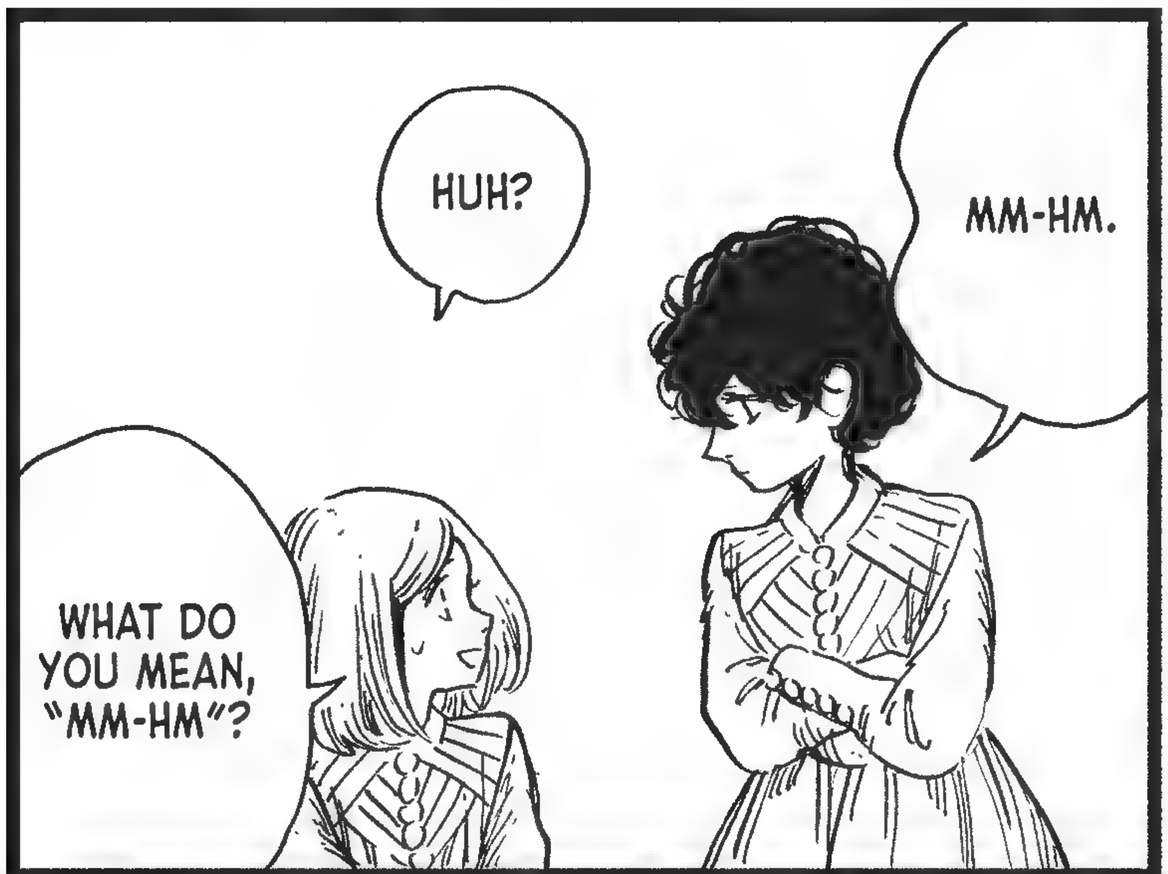
I HOPE I HELPED. I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE...

...WHAT KIND OF WAND YOU COME UP WITH!

GOOD NIGHT, TARTAH!



I'LL BE SURE TO HAVE IT READY BY SILVER EVE!
Y-YEAH!


HUH?
MM-HM.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "MM-HM"?

HUH?! BUT NOW I *REALLY* WANNA KNOW! AND WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?!
NO REASON.
JUST FORGET IT.

I'D NEVER SEEN HER LIKE THAT.

SHE LOOKS SO COOL WHEN SHE'S CONCEN-TRATING.

I GOTTA GET SERIOUS, TOO, IF I'M GONNA KEEP UP WITH HER.

...

I CAN'T FALL BEHIND.

FWMP

FWA

IT'S 'CAUSE OF ALL THE PASSAGE STARS THAT FELL.

THE EARTH'S SHOWING HOW HAPPY IT IS THAT THEY CROSSED OVER.

LOOK AT ALL THESE FLOWERS THAT SPRANG UP OVERNIGHT!

CHIRP CHIRP

CHIRP CHIRP CHIRP

Chapter 42

AAH... あーん

YEAH...

'CAUSE PASSAGE STARS ALSO MARK THE START OF THE HARVEST SEASON, RIGHT?

THE FRUIT'S REAL RIPE, TOO.

HEY, UM... POISONOUS MOUNTAIN APPLES ARE SUPPOSED TO BE RED, RIGHT?

I WONDER IF THERE'S ANY OTHER WAY TO TELL THEM APART. BESIDES *COLOR*, I MEAN.

YOU KNOW, LIKE BY SMELL OR SHAPE.

HMM... YEAH!

THAT'S A REALLY GOOD POINT!

AND THROUGH *MAGIC*, I BET WE COULD FIND A WAY.

YEAH! EXACTLY!

...MAKES LIFE EASIER FOR LOTS OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE!

HAVING LOTS OF DIFFERENT WAYS TO TELL THINGS APART...

TURNING THINGS YOU *CAN'T* DO INTO THINGS YOU *CAN!*

RIGHT?

FWUMF

'CAUSE THAT'S WHAT MAGIC'S FOR.

REALLY HAPPY, YOU KNOW?

I'M HAPPY.

TMP

HAPPY THAT I CAN PUT MY WHOLE HEART INTO THE ONE THING I WANT TO DO.

IT'S SO GREAT TO BE ABLE TO FEEL THAT WAY.

HAPPY TO KNOW I CAN WORK ON BECOMING AN APPRENTICE.

IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU, COCO!

AND YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TURNED IT ALL AROUND FOR ME.

I KNOW IT SOUNDS STRANGE, BUT FOR THE LONGEST TIME I BELIEVED...

...I DIDN'T HAVE THE *RIGHT* TO DO THOSE THINGS.

DON'T YOU?

HUH?

I'M GLAD AT LEAST ONE OF US FEELS THAT WAY.

THE TRUTH IS...

I...

HEL-LOOOOO! OVER HERE!

HEY, YOU TWO!

WH—

!

MASTER WANTS YOU TO HURRY INSIDE! THE WINDOWWAY'S CONNECTED TO KALHN!

JUST NOW...

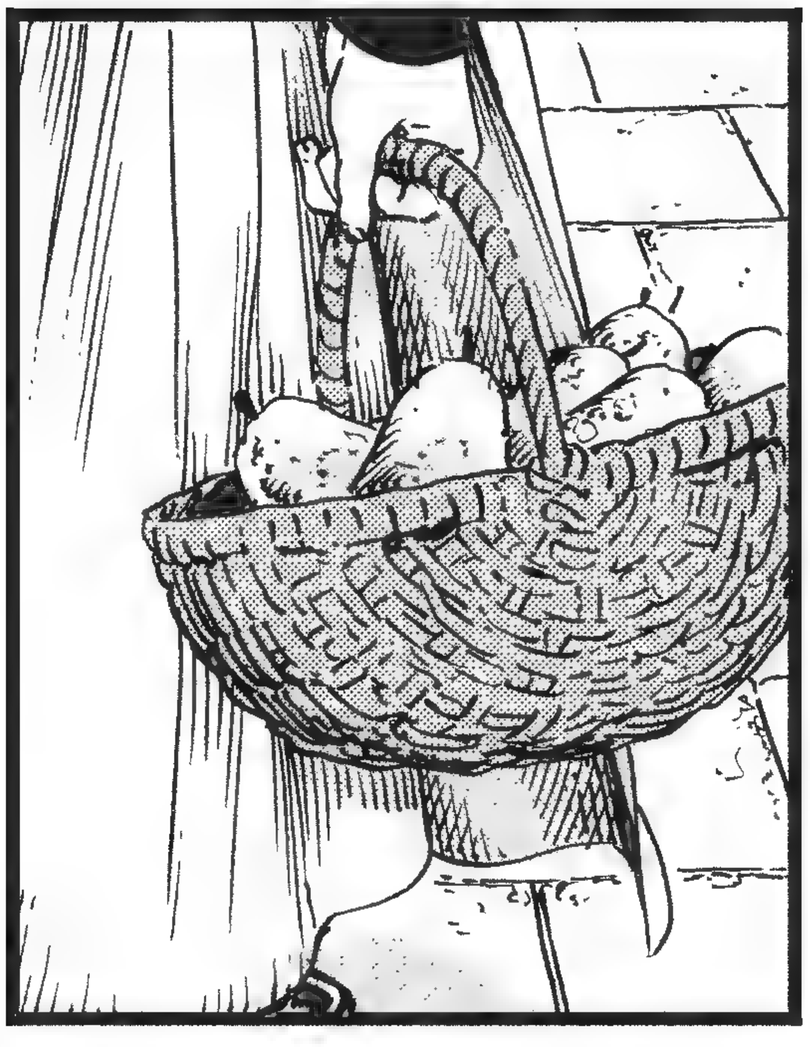
WHAT WAS IT SHE WAS GOING TO SAY?

WAIT! COCO...!

BE RIGHT THERE!

IS EVERY-THING OKAY...?

...



BUT IF WE'RE TO PREPARE FOR SILVER EVE TOGETHER, I SUSPECT WE'LL FIND OURSELVES VISITING MUCH MORE OFTEN.

GIVEN KALHN'S PROXIMITY TO THE ATELIER...

...I'D NEVER GONE TO THE TROUBLE OF CONNECTING THE WINDOW-WAY.

IT ONLY TAKES US A MOMENT TO GET HERE NOW.

SHOULDN'T WE HAVE INVITED EVERYONE ALONG? I BET THEY WOULD HAVE ENJOYED IT.

THAT'S VERY KIND OF YOU, MISTER QIFREY...

AND THIS WILL BE *MUCH* SAFER THAN TRAVELING BY HIGHWAY.

GRANDPA WOULD LOVE THAT!

HE LIKES IT WHEN THINGS ARE LIVELY.

WE'RE JUST SEEING TARTAH HOME, AND THEN...

...WE'LL HEAD BACK OURSELVES. WE CAN ARRANGE A PROPER VISIT WITH MISTER NOLNOA NEXT TIME.

I OUGHT TO PICK UP THE INGREDIENTS HERE IN TOWN.

AH. THEN I SHALL HAVE TO BAKE ONE FOR OUR VISIT.

OH! AND JUST SO YOU KNOW, HE *REALLY* LIKES WHITE LEMON CAKE!

GOOD.

SHE'S HER USUAL HAPPY SELF.

チラッ
GLANCE

I JUST CAN'T PUT MY FINGER ON IT.

BUT STILL...

IT KINDA FEELS LIKE SOMETHING'S CHANGED.

OH DEAR... IS THIS THE RIGHT WAY?

7" VWSH

7" VWSH

HEY, TARTAH! HURRY UP!

IT'S LIKE SHE'S RIGHT THERE, AND YET...

...SOMEHOW FAR AWAY.

GWIP

ERP...

YOU'RE NOT TOO GOOD AT DIRECTIONS, ARE YOU, MISTER QIFREY?

HOW DID YOU EVER MANAGE TO LIVE IN THE GREAT HALL?

That place is like one giant maze...

MAYBE I'M READING TOO MUCH INTO IT.

...

MAY I HELP YOU...?

ERM...

MM-HM. JUST AS I SUSPECTED.

FLIT

FLIT

FLIT

LI

LI

STAAAAAAAAARE

ESTEEMED MISTER WITCH...

I HATE TO PRY, BUT...

...YOU ARE *INJURED*, ARE YOU NOT?

PLEASE! I'M IN NO NEED OF ASSISTANCE!

I'VE ALREADY HAD PERFECTLY SUFFICIENT CARE!

ZWM

NO! I ASSURE YOU, I'M QUITE—

ZWM

HM?

FSH ス

FSH ス!!

キラキラ

KER-SHIING

NONSENSE! YOU'RE FEELING A BIT FEVERISH, YES?

...BUT NOTHING ESCAPES THE EYES OF A TRAINED PROFES-SIONAL.

YOU HIDE IT QUITE WELL...

SHOVE

COME ON, NOW!

IN WITH YOU!

SHOVE

YOU CAN'T EXPECT TO RECOVER IF YOU SIMPLY LEAVE THIS BE!

SHOVE

YOUR BANDAGES AND POULTICES NEED TO BE CHANGED!

WHAT'S SUFFICIENT ABOUT *ONE* HOSPITAL VISIT?!

IF YOU DARLINGS CAN PLEASE WAIT HERE IN THE HOSPITAL, I'M SURE HE'LL BE OUT SOON!

...AS YOU CAN SEE, WE'LL BE TENDING TO YOUR MASTER FOR A BIT.

GAPE ほぉ

OKAY...?

ふぃ

ん ooo

WOW. DOCTORS SURE ARE *INSISTENT.*

YES?

HEY, UM... COCO?

RIGHT?

HE'S UP ON THE SECOND FLOOR, SO—

ZLIP

ERM! NEVER-MIND!

LET'S GO PAY GRANDPA A VISIT WHILE WE'RE HERE!

SOUNDS LOVELY! WE CAN GIVE HIM THE MOUNTAIN APPLES WE PICKED.

KLATTER

6

MOLY...!

HOLY...!

KA KRASH

THAT WAS *CLOSE!!*

FWOING

FWOING

FWOING

THANK GOODNESS WE MADE IT!

YOU ALMOST TUMBLED ALL THE WAY DOWN THE STAIRS!

DANGLE

KRSH

WAIT. DID YOU SAY...

HUH?

ARE YOU OKAY? WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?!

YOU KNOW BETTER THAN TO TRY GOING OUTSIDE ON YOUR OWN, CUSTAS!

CUSTAS...? IS THAT YOU?

WAIT. YOU *KNOW* HIM?

...COCO?

COCO DOESN'T JUST *KNOW* ME.

SHE'S THE WITCH I OWE MY LIFE TO!

AND HERE SHE IS AGAIN...

...TO SAVE ME ONCE MORE!

ALMOST MAKES YOU THINK...

...THE TWO OF US ARE BOUND BY *FATE.*

GAAAH!

H...

HOLD IT! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

SAVING YOU WAS A *TEAM EFFORT!*

ZWIP

HUH?

AH, FORGET IT!

THAT'S *NOT* THE POINT. SAVING PEOPLE IS A WITCH'S WHOLE...

Jealousy's not a good look for you.

AW... DON'T BE LIKE THAT, TARTAH.

YOU'RE STILL MY NUMBER TWO, Y'KNOW?

TMP TMP TMP TMP

WHAT'S GOING ON OVER HERE?!

CUSTAS! CUT IT OUT!

HUH? OH, YEAH. SEE, THIS DOPE WAS—

DID YOU MEET HERE AT THE HOSPITAL?

WOW! I HAD NO IDEA YOU TWO WERE SUCH GOOD FRIENDS!

HAAAH

HEAVENS. I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.

THE HOSPITAL IS A PLACE FOR *HEALING*, CUSTAS, NOT ACCRUING MORE INJURIES.

I HEARD A TERRIBLE NOISE, AND—

THE WITCHES KEPT ME SAFE AGAIN!

BUT I'M NOT HURT, MADAM DOCTOR!

!!

GASP

AWWW! AT LEAST TAKE ME TO THE STOREHOUSE!

TARTAH'S HERE. THAT MEANS IT'S TIME FOR US TO STUDY, RIGHT?

HONESTLY. COME ALONG, NOW. BACK TO YOUR ROOM.

DON'T EXPECT YOUR LUCK TO HOLD OUT FOREVER.

ひょい

LI

PLUCK

...HAVE BEEN STUDYING APOTHECARY!

THE TWO OF US...

HEY! COCO, YOU SHOULD JOIN US!

YOU'D BE A BIG HELP, AND IT'S TONS OF FUN!

BUT... MEDICINE AND WITCHES...

WHAT...?

BUT THERE'S A GOOD REASON!

SO WHY WOULD YOU—

I MEAN, WHAT'S SO WRONG ABOUT IT, ANYWAY?!

JOLT

IT'S A VIOLA-TION.

YEAH. YOU DON'T NEED TO REMIND ME.

THINK ABOUT IT. MEDICINE AND MAGIC BOTH COME FROM THE SAME PLACE.

THEY'RE JUST...

...TWO TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE FOR HELPING PEOPLE.

THEY USE A LOT OF THE SAME COMPONENTS THAT WE MIX INTO INK.

IT'S JUST A DIFFERENCE OF HOW THEY'RE PROCESSED AND COMBINED.

AND IT'S FUN TO LEARN ABOUT MEDICINES.

MEDICINE AND SPELLCASTING GO HAND IN HAND.

THE KNOWLEDGE YOU GAIN ABOUT ONE APPLIES TO THE OTHER. THE WAY I SEE IT, THERE'S NO DOWNSIDE.

DOES...

DOES MISTER NOLNOA KNOW?

YOU'RE THE FIRST WITCH TO FIND OUT, COCO.

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS WHAT I'M DOING HERE.

NO. I HAVEN'T TOLD GRANDPA A THING.

I'M SICK OF HAVING TO GIVE UP ON MY DREAMS.

I'M SICK OF NOT BEING ALLOWED TO *TRY*.

I'M SICK OF THE WAY THINGS ARE.

I KNOW I'LL BE IN DEEP TROUBLE IF WORD GETS OUT.

BUT... THAT'S NOT GOING TO STOP ME.

AND I FIGURE...

...IF *ANYONE* GETS THAT, IT'S YOU.

OH, TARTAH...

DOCTORS SURE ARE *INSISTENT* FOLK.

DEAR ME...

COCO?

GASP

!

THEY SENT ME OFF WITH A HEALTHY SUPPLY OF ANODYNE AND FEBRIFUGE.

I SUPPOSE I'LL HAVE TO TAKE THINGS SLOW FOR A WHILE, IF ONLY SO THEY DON'T GET AFTER ME AGAIN...

YOU HAVE TO PROMISE NOT TO SAY ANYTHING.

UM...

DID SOME-THING HAPPEN?

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

NOPE. NOTHING AT ALL.

I'M FINE. REALLY!

NOT TO GRANDPA. NOT TO ANYONE.

NOT EVEN TO MISTER QIFREY OR THE OTHER APPREN-TICES.

DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY YOU WERE GOING TO TAKE IT SLOW FOR A WHILE?

HM. I SEE. WELL, LET'S GET BACK AND START WHIPPING UP THAT WHITE LEMON CAKE, SHALL WE?

Don't upset the doctors again!

FOOL!

IT BROKE!

SNAP

BLAST IT ALL.

WE COULD HAVE MADE A FORTUNE OFF THAT CHAIR.

IT'S NOT MY FAULT!

THE CHAIR ONLY TRIPPED BECAUSE THE BRAT MADE A RUN FOR IT!

WHY'D YOU HAVE TO RUIN IT?!

GWIP

IS THERE A PROBLEM HERE?

THANKS TO *YOU*, WE JUST LOST—

LITTLE WRETCH.

KRNCH

I'LL SHOW YOU.

Chapter 43

LOOKS TO ME...

...LIKE THE KID'S CHAIR BROKE.

HOW ABOUT I CALL A GROWN-UP WITCH TO FIX IT?

AND YOU ALL MUST BE TRYING TO *HELP*.

I'M AN APPRENTICE, YOU KNOW.

Tsk!

THE LAST THING WE NEED IS A *WITCH* NOSING AROUND.

FORGET IT. LET'S SCRAM.

OH! MASTER!

PERFECT TIMING! OVER HERE!

THERE'RE SOME MEN IN NEED OF—

LUCKY FOR US, THOSE GUYS WEREN'T TOO BRIGHT.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

HAH! THEY FELL FOR IT.

PBT

I don't even have a Master. Duh.

TMP

TMP

...SNAPPED.

KLAK

YOU OUGHTA MAKE A REPORT TO THE TOWNSHIP GUARD.

ヨD... STAGGER

THOSE WERE CONTRAPTION THIEVES, WEREN'T THEY? THAT COULD'VE GOTTEN BAD REAL FAST.

I *SNAPPED* THEM.

THEY'RE *BROKEN.*

MY BRAND NEW LEGS.

WHAT GOOD IS A *BROKEN STICK* FOR WALKING?

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO LIVE MY LIFE NOW?

KACLUNK

CLUNK

HOLD THAT THOUGHT.

...

PRESSSS

チョーン PLIP

チョーン PLIP

PLAF

PLAF

PLAF

MY NAME'S TARTAH.

WHAT'S YOURS?

THIS BONDING TINCTURE IS REAL STRONG STUFF.

SMEAR A LITTLE ON, AND IT'LL KEEP THINGS TOGETHER JUST LIKE THAT.

MY NAME'S...

...CUSTAS.

I'M...

C'MON. TAKE MY HAND, CUSTAS.

スッ

SHF

I'LL HELP YOU BACK TO YOUR FEET.

MASTER! YOU'RE DOING IT *AGAIN!*

THROB

THROB

THROB

OOH, THAT SMARTS!

YEOUCH!

YES. I KNOW, BUT—

THE GIRLS ARE RIGHT, QIFREY.

GIMME THE BROOM. *I'LL* SWEEP.

DIDN'T THE DOCTORS TELL YOU TO AVOID PUTTING TOO MUCH STRAIN ON YOUR RIGHT ARM?

WHAT ABOUT THAT DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND?

What she said!

Yeah!

DON'T SWEAT IT. WHY HAVE TWO PAIRS OF HANDS AT HOME IF NOT TO SPLIT THE HOUSEWORK?

AH. THAT'S VERY KIND OF YOU, BUT...

...AREN'T YOU THE BUSIEST OF US ALL? SILVER EVE IS ALMOST HERE.

YOU MEAN *YOU* SOMETIMES HAVE TROUBLE WITH SPELLS, TOO, MASTER OLLY?

...AND THEN THERE'S THE FACT THAT I'VE HIT A DEAD END WITH MY LATEST SPELL.

TIDYING UP WILL BE A NICE CHANGE OF PACE.

It's funny, y'know?

My room's always cleanest whenever a deadline is looming...

IT'S BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD FOR ME.

Haaaaah

WOBBLE

AND THIS LATEST ONE... WELL, I'M GONNA HAVE TO NIX IT.

WOBBLE

WHY WOULDN'T I?

I HAVE FAILURES ALL THE TIME. EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE.

WHAT'S "NIX IT"?

HE MEANS HE'S GOTTA SCRAP THE WHOLE SPELL.

Great. Now they're begging to see my failures.

NOW I'M *REALLY* CURIOUS TO KNOW WHAT KIND OF SPELL IT WAS!

OOH!

FINE. HERE YOU GO.

HOW COME YOU CAN HOLD IT?! IT'S ON *FIRE!*

...ERM...

...*NOT* GONNA BURN IT?

EEK! GET THAT THING AWAY FROM YOUR HAND! YOU'RE...

GWUUUH?!

BUT OTHER THAN THAT, IT LOOKS AND ACTS LIKE REAL FIRE. IT'LL STILL KEEP BEASTS AT BAY AND LIGHT THE WAY.

NO RISK OF SPREADING OR CAUSING AN INCIDENT. AND IT DOESN'T USE ANY FUEL, EITHER, SO IT'LL NEVER GO OUT.

IT WON'T BURN YOU OR ANYTHING ELSE IT COMES INTO CONTACT WITH.

IT'S CALLED THE PHANTASMAL FIREBALL.

IN SHORT, IT'S FAUX FIRE WITH ALL THE CONVENIENCES OF THE REAL THING.

INDEED. IT'S THE FACT THAT IT'S *NOT* DANGEROUS...

...THAT MAKES IT A FAILED CREATION.

BUT IT'S WONDERFUL! WHY WOULD YOU NIX *THIS?!*

THAT'S THE PROBLEM.

IT SEEMS LIKE IT'D BE REALLY USEFUL. FIRE WITHOUT ANY OF THE DANGER!

...WILL GO ON BELIEVING THERE'S NOTHING THERE TO FEAR.

ANY CHILD WHO GROWS UP WITHOUT A HEALTHY RESPECT FOR FIRE...

YUP. WHAT QIFREY SAID.

OR WHAT IF SOMEONE THRUSTS HER HAND STRAIGHT INTO THE HEARTH...

...'CAUSE SHE'S GROWN UP BELIEVING FIRE'S NOTHING TO BE SCARED OF?

THINK ABOUT IT. WHAT IF A KID HANDLES A *REAL* FLAME THE SAME WAY HE'S LEARNED TO TREAT THIS STUFF?

IT'S JUST A MATTER OF ADULTS NEEDING TO TEACH KIDS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAKE FLAMES AND REAL ONES.

WHY WOULD ANY BLAME FOR THAT REST ON YOUR SPELL?

HANG ON.

AND WHAT HAPPENS...

...WHEN ONE ADULT IN A CHILD'S LIFE...

...CAUTIONS OF THE DANGER OF FIRE, WHILE ANOTHER...

...TREATS IT CASUALLY, AS IF IT POSES NO THREAT?

THIS FLAME HAS THE POTENTIAL...

...HOWEVER SLIGHT...

...TO UNDERMINE A HEALTHY FEAR OF FIRE IN SOCIETY.

PUTTING IT UP FOR SALE WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE.

AND THAT'S WHY I SIMPLY CANNOT DO IT.

IN A WORLD WHERE CONTRADICTORY UNDERSTANDINGS OF FIRE EXIST SIDE BY SIDE...

...WE CAN NO LONGER BE CERTAIN THAT *ALL* CHILDREN WILL ARRIVE AT THE PROPER CONCLUSIONS.

...AS YOU DESIGN YOUR CONTRAPTIONS TO SELL AT SILVER EVE.

...THAT ALL OF YOU WILL TAKE CARE TO IMAGINE THE MANY POSSIBLE IMPACTS YOUR SPELLS MIGHT HAVE ON THE WORLD...

IT IS BOTH MINE AND OLRUGGIO'S HOPE...

JUST AS THEY MIGHT BETTER LIVES, THEY CAN BE A SOURCE OF TERRIBLE HARM.

YET THEY HAVE THE POWER TO RESHAPE THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE.

OUR SPELLS ARE BUT WHISPERS.

IN FACT, THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF *ALL* MAGIC. PLEASE TAKE CARE NOT TO FORGET IT.

...WE MUST EVER QUESTION OURSELVES...

...WEIGHING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT WHICH WE CREATE.

AS LONG AS WE ARE TO SERVE THE WORLD AS WITCHES...

THE POWER IT POSSESSES TO CHANGE THINGS FOR BETTER OR WORSE...

THE IMPACT MAGIC CAN HAVE ON THE WORLD...

THOSE ARE BOTH THINGS...

...OF WHICH I'M PAINFULLY AWARE.

COCO?

UH OH... IS COCO STARTING TO GO LOCO?

NGH... PLEASE STOP.

EEP!!

S-SORRY! I GUESS I WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION.

SNAP OUT OF IT!

HEY! COCO!

S-SORRY... YOU'RE RIGHT.

TETIA'S GOT A POINT. YOU'RE SPACING OUT A LOT THESE DAYS.

COULD YOU AT LEAST NOT DO IT WHILE WE'RE VISITING MISTER NOLNOA? IT'S IMPOLITE.

HE HAS...?

DON'T FRET IT, LITTLE MISS. YOUTH COMES WITH ITS FAIR SHARE OF WORRIES.

TAKE TARTAH. HE'S BEEN ALL WRAPPED UP IN HIS THOUGHTS THIS PAST WHILE.

...THAT OUGHTA BE ENOUGH FOR ME TO REST EASY.

'COURSE, I SUPPOSE IF HE'S GOT CLOSE FRIENDS LIKE YOU GIRLS...

I TRY TO BRING IT UP CASUALLY, BUT HE JUST WON'T OPEN UP TO ME.

IT'S TRUE, THEN.

HE HASN'T SAID ANYTHING TO MISTER NOLNOA.

HE OUGHTA BE BUSY WITH HIS SCHOOLWORK SOMEWHERE DOWNSTAIRS.

I KNOW STUDIES ARE IMPORTANT, BUT SO IS *CAKE!*

COCO, COULD YOU RUN DOWN AND INVITE HIM TO JOIN US?

IN FACT, LET'S GET HIM UP HERE!

I-I'LL BE RIGHT BACK WITH TARTAH!

SQUIRM

SQUIRM

SQUIRM

NO! BAD BRUSH-BUDDY!

THE CAKE ISN'T FOR YOU!

AND I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH LONGER THAT BRUSHBUDDY OF YOURS CAN HOLD OFF.

AND THE HALFTONE WEED SELLS FOR A TON...

...SO IF YOU FIND ANY, *DEFINITELY* DON'T EAT IT!

...AND SPARKBLOOM'S NOT.

TRANQUILEAF IS EDIBLE...

HUH?!

UGHHH... CAN'T WE JUST REMEMBER HOW MUCH THEY'RE *WORTH* AND CALL IT A DAY?!

GOOD.

NEXT, LET'S WORK ON WRITING THE NAMES.

Aren't we done yet?

SWEET! COCO! YOU'RE HERE!

COCO! I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE HERE.

AHA! I *THOUGHT* I'D FIND YOU IN THE STORE-HOUSE!

DAGDA AND I WERE ALWAYS ON THE ROAD...

...SO ANY FACE I SEE TWICE IS LIKE A GIFT FROM FATE!

IT'S SO GREAT TO SEE YOU *AGAIN!*

EVERY YEAR, FROM SNOWEND TO HARVEST, THEY TRAVEL THE LAND...

...GATHERING STORIES TO PERFORM AT THE CASTLE DURING THE SNOWFALL SEASON.

CUSTAS AND DAGDA ARE WANDERING MINSTRELS.

ON THE ROAD?

SORRY, BUT NO CAN DO RIGHT NOW.

Besides, I don't perform for free.

WOW! I WANNA HEAR!

YOU PLAY AN *INSTRU-MENT?!*

TRUTH IS, OUR INSTRU-MENTS...OUR LIVELIHOODS... WERE WASHED AWAY...

...DURING THAT MESS WE GOT INTO AT THE RIVER.

IF DAGDA WEREN'T SUCH A SOFTY, HE'D BE PLAYING AGAIN IN NO TIME.

SEEMS HE JUST CAN'T GIVE UP ON ME.

...AND TREATMENT AT THE HOSPITAL AIN'T CHEAP.

NEW ONES ARE GONNA COST US A PRETTY COIN...

OF COURSE! THE STAIR-CASE RIVER!

THAT'S WHAT HE SAID WHEN HE BURST INTO THE ATELIER.

BUT... ISN'T MISTER DAGDA YOUR FATHER?

DAGDA'S THE GUY WHO GOT ME OFF THE STREETS.

NO WAY. HE'S NOT MY DAD.

LEAP AND DANCE TO SLEEP WITHOUT FREEZING.

SOUND YOUR BELLS TO EAT FOR THE DAY.

I WAS ON THE VERGE OF STARVATION, LIVIN' IN THE FILTH OF THE SLUMS...

...WHEN DAGDA SHOWED UP TO TEACH ME THAT WAY OF LIFE.

HE'S NOT MY DAD, BUT TO ME, HE'S FAMILY.

AND MY TEACHER. AND MY BUSINESS PARTNER, TOO.

I'M REAL LUCKY TO HAVE CROSSED PATHS WITH HIM.

YEAH! HE'S A GREAT GUY!

MISTER DAGDA SEEMS LIKE A WONDERFUL PERSON!

GRIN

IT'S NOT *HIS* FAULT I GOT HURT...

...AND ENDED UP THIS WAY.

IN A WAY, HE'S *TOO* NICE.

I'M GLAD YOU'RE EXCITED ABOUT THE HERBS, BUT COULD YOU FOCUS ON THE *ALPHABET* FIRST?

APPARENTLY, SOME PEOPLE WILL PAY BIG TIME FOR WEEDS YOU PICK UP OUTSIDE OF TOWN!

SO I'M HAVIN' TARTAH TEACH ME ABOUT HERBS!

A LOTTA THESE SELL FOR GOOD MONEY!

Or this little baby!

Like that one over there!

And this one!

THAT'S WHY I'M TRYIN' TO MAKE THINGS EASIER ON HIM, EVEN JUST A LITTLE!

HMPH

BUT I NEED TO RAKE IN THE DOUGH *NOW!*

...IF YOU LEARN HOW TO READ BOOKS AND STUFF ALL ON YOUR OWN.

YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WELL-PAYING JOBS...

YOU TWO HAVE IT EASY. YOUR FUTURE'S SET 'CAUSE YOU'RE WITCHES.

IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY FOR ME, AND IT ALWAYS WILL BE. I'VE MADE MY PEACE WITH IT.

BUT PEOPLE BORN DOWN IN THE DREGS GOTTA FIGHT TOOTH AND NAIL JUST TO SURVIVE.

JUST BECAUSE YOU AREN'T *BORN* A WITCH DOESN'T MEAN...

WHAT I'M SAYING IS... THERE'S HOPE FOR *EVERYONE!*

SO, PLEASE...

NO...!

C'MON, NOW...

THAT'S NOT TRUE, CUSTAS!

FLINCH

YEAH! MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT!

GRIN

...AND THE ABILITY TO CAST *SPELLS*, MAYBE I'D BE JUST LIKE YOU!

IF I'D HAD A *HOUSE* AND A *SCHOOL*...

...AND NO WORRIES ABOUT *FOOD* OR *MONEY*...

SLAM

BUT I WASN'T *BORN* ON FORTUNE'S SIDE!

THE WHOLE *WORLD'S* AGAINST ME...

...AND NOW I GOTTA MAKE MY WAY THROUGH IT ON THESE STUPID, BRITTLE LEGS OF *WOOD!*

WAIT ...!

I DON'T FEEL LIKE TALKIN' ANYMORE TODAY.

...SORRY. JUST FORGET IT. I'M GONNA HEAD BACK TO MY ROOM.

HUSH

WHERE WERE YOU? I WORRY WHEN YOU'RE NOT IN YOUR ROOM!

DAGDA!

LET IT GO, COCO.

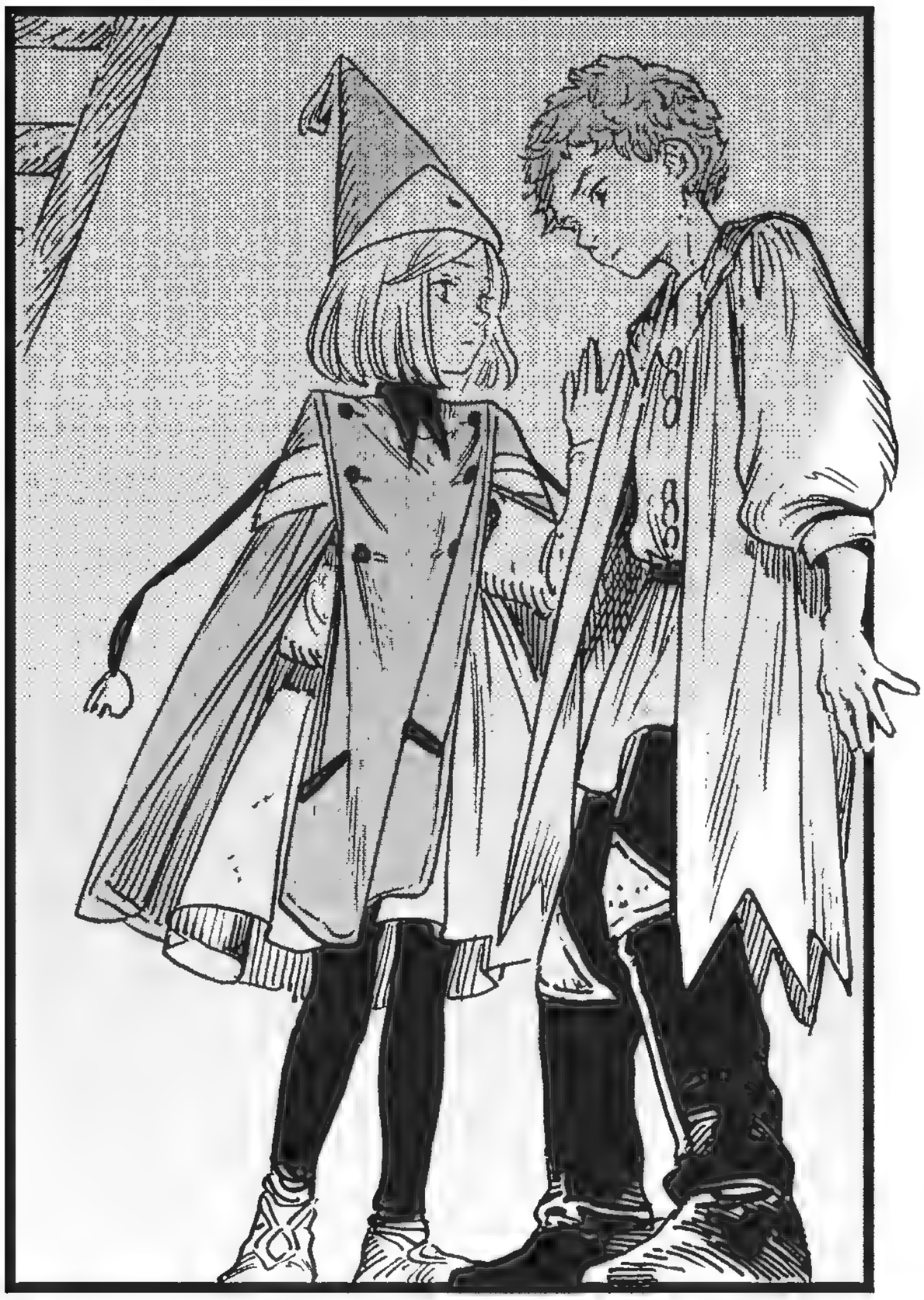
CUSTAS! I DIDN'T MEAN—

THERE'S BLOOD ON YOUR CLOTHES! ARE YOU STILL OUT DOING DANGEROUS WORK?!

PLEASE! YOU HAVE TO STOP! WHY ARE YOU RISKING YOUR LIFE FOR *ME*?!

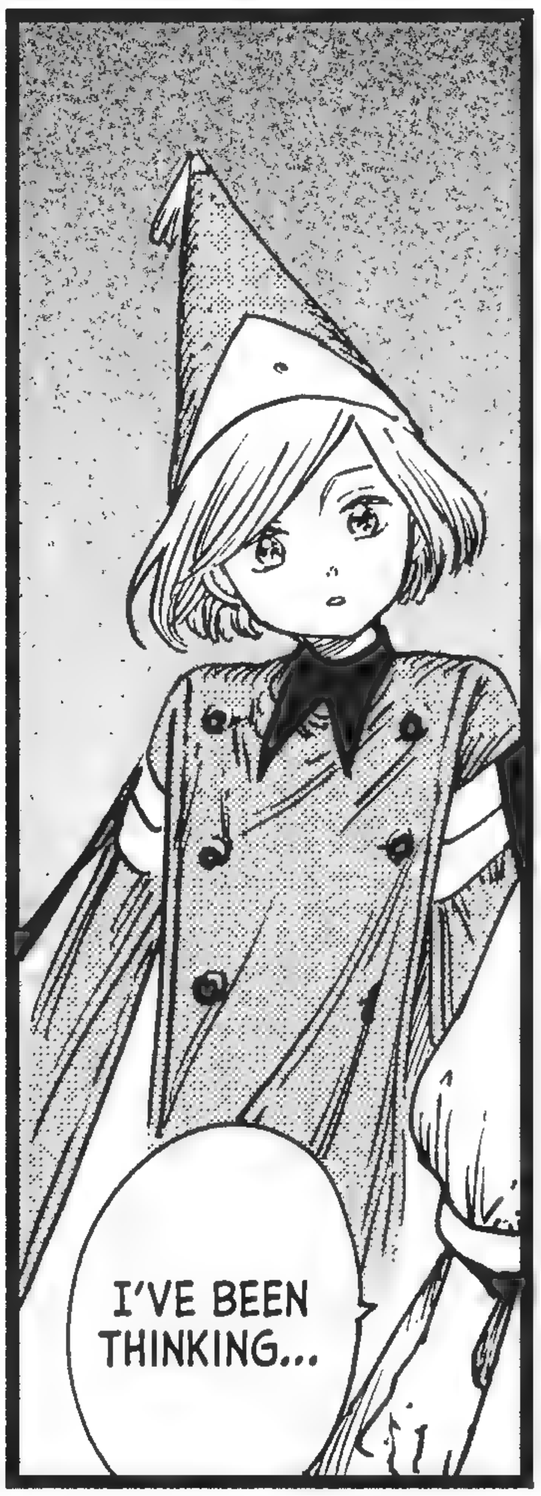
JUST LEAVE TOWN! ABANDON ME! LIVE YOUR LIFE, DAGDA!

I HAVE TO. A MERCENARY'S PAY IS TOO GOOD TO TURN DOWN.



DAGDA, PLEASE...!

THE COBBLE-STONES IN KALHN ARE AWFUL SLIPPERY.


I'VE BEEN THINKING...

...

SQRK

AND WE'VE GOT LOTS OF SLOPES AND STEPS AND DITCHES.

EVEN WHEN I'M OUT WALKING, IT'S EASY TO TRIP HERE.

HUH?

...

THAT'S THE REAL REASON YOU STARTED STUDYING HERBS, ISN'T IT?

KINDA LIKE HOW POISON APPLES AND SILVERWASH DON'T MIX.

A ROAD MADE FOR HUMANS ISN'T A GOOD FIT FOR A SEALCHAIR.

...I'D HELP HIM BACK TO HIS FEET.

I TOLD HIM...

YOU'RE DOING IT FOR *CUSTAS'* SAKE.

I HELD OUT MY HAND ONE TIME, AND THAT WAS IT.

BUT THAT'S ALL I'VE DONE FOR HIM.

RIGHT...

I MAY NEVER KNOW HOW HE FEELS ABOUT IT...

...BUT I KNOW *EXACTLY* HOW I DO.

I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE YOUR WHOLE FUTURE CLOSED OFF...

...BECAUSE OF SOMETHING YOU CAN'T DO A THING ABOUT.

IT'S AWFUL. IT LEAVES YOU FEELING SO POWER-LESS.

THEN LET'S...

...HOW BADLY I WISHED THAT THINGS COULD CHANGE.

AND I REMEM-BER...

YEAH.

I GET IT.

I KNOW THAT FEELING, TOO.

LET'S CHANGE IT, TARTAH.

HUH...?

LET'S CHANGE THE THINGS WE *CAN!*

THAT'S WHAT MAGIC IS.

...FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE.

IT'S THE POWER TO ALTER...

...THE LITTLE SLICE OF WORLD AROUND US...

WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CHANGE HIS *BODY*...

...BUT WE CAN CHANGE WHAT'S *AROUND* HIM.

IF HE FEELS LIKE THE WHOLE WORLD'S AGAINST HIM...

...LET'S RESHAPE IT INTO A PLACE WHERE HE CAN BELONG!

Chapter 44

カリ!!
SCRAPE

カリ…
SCRAPE
もぐ"
MUNCH
もぐ"
MONCH
カリ!!
SCRAPE
むぐ"
MUNCH

NICE TO SEE YOU, MISTER QIFREY!
MASTER, WE'RE GOING OUTSIDE!
ALL RIGHT, THEN...

MASTER, I'M GOING TO OPEN THE WINDOW-WAY!
ALL RIGHT, THEN.

カリラ!
CLATTER

THANKS FOR LUNCH!

THEY'RE NOT PLAYING.

TARTAH SURE IS SPENDING A LOT OF TIME HERE LATELY. I WONDER WHAT SORT OF GAMES THEY'RE PLAYING.

OH, IS THAT SO?

THEY'RE DESIGNING SOME KIND OF NEW SPELL! THAT'S WHAT COCO SAID.

...

I WONDER WHAT SORT OF MAGIC THEY'RE WORKING ON.

WELL, THAT EXPLAINS THE EXCITEMENT.

ズウーーーン…
SLUUUUUUUUMP
WE'VE BEEN COMING UP WITH IDEAS FOR *THREE DAYS.*
KA-FMP
MY BRAIN'S ALL OUT OF STORMS!
THERE'S NO WAY. A SPELL TO CHANGE THE WORLD?
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO PULL *THAT* OFF?!
WELL, WE'VE HAD A *FEW* GOOD ONES!
WHAT ABOUT THESE SEALCHAIR LEGS YOU CARVED?

WE WERE GONNA INSCRIBE SEALS OF CRUSHING ON THE BOTTOMS, REMEMBER?

THAT WAY, ANYTIME HE'S ON A ROUGH ROAD...

...EACH STEP HE TAKES WILL TURN THE BUMPS INTO NICE, EVEN SAND!

YEAH, ABOUT THAT...

DO IOT
KRUNCH
I MEAN, HE'D BE CRUSHING WOOD FLOORS AND COBBLESTONES IN TOWN...
...AND I DOUBT THE CHAIR WOULD WORK AT ALL IN MUD OR WHEN IT'S RAINING.
ZIP
...BUT I'M KINDA GLAD I DIDN'T SPEND TIME TRYING TO DO ALL FOUR.
I CARVED THESE TO MATCH THE FRONT LEGS OF THE CHAIR HE'S GOT...
HEY! WHAT ABOUT THAT THING YOU SUGGESTED? IT SEEMED PRETTY GOOD.
NOT TO MENTION, ANY STAIRS HE TRIED TO CLIMB WOULD CRUMBLE RIGHT BENEATH HIM.
I THINK WE'D BETTER GO WITH SOMETHING ELSE.

Like, "vwoosh"!

YOU KNOW, A SPELL THAT MAKES STAIRS AND WALKWAYS SLIDE AHEAD AUTOMATICALLY!

VRMMMMMM

VRMMMMMM

SEEMS REAL USEFUL.

AND KINDA COOL, HONESTLY. HE'D BE TRAVELING IN STYLE!

WELL...

THE PROBLEM IS, THERE ARE *LOTS* OF DIFFERENT STAIRWAYS IN THE WORLD.

AND IT WOULDN'T EXACTLY HELP ON THE BUMPY ROADS YOU FIND *OUTSIDE* OF TOWN.

SLUUUUUUUUUUMP

IT SURE IS TRICKY TRYING TO FORESEE *EVERY* POSSIBLE SCENARIO...

EVEN IF I WANT TO CHANGE THE WORLD, AND START WHERE I CAN...

...*WHAT* WE CAN DO... STILL ISN'T VERY MUCH, IS IT?

I CAN'T EVEN *BEGIN* TO IMAGINE THE SIZE OF SPELL WE'D NEED...

...TO CHANGE EVERY ROAD IN THE ENTIRE WORLD.

STILL, THE ROADS WE HAVE NOW...

...ARE THERE BECAUSE PEOPLE LAID THEM STONE BY STONE FOR OTHERS TO USE.

AND IF THE PEOPLE LIVING LONG AGO COULD MANAGE THAT...

...THEN SURELY IT'S POSSIBLE TO IMPROVE THEM SO THEY'RE USEFUL TO EVERYONE.

?

WHY WOULD THEY? THEY'RE *WITCHES.*

I WONDER WHY THE WITCHES OF OLD...

...DIDN'T MAKE THEM THAT WAY IN THE FIRST PLACE.

...MUCH OF A PROBLEM FOR THEM.

WALKING'S NEVER EXACTLY BEEN...

THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF BARRIERS OUT THERE...

...THAT YOU NEVER EVEN NOTICE UNLESS THEY AFFECT YOU PERSONALLY.

...NOT MUCH OF A PROBLEM.

OF COURSE, THE WHOLE POINT OF MAGIC IS TO LIGHTEN THE BURDENS OTHERS BEAR.

I GUESS WE JUST HAVE TO TRY HARDER TO UNDERSTAND HOW WE CAN—

UM... COCO?

ZWRM

WALKING ISN'T MUCH OF A PROBLEM FOR *WITCHES!*

HUH?

IT'S NOT MUCH OF A PROBLEM!

MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING WE *CAN* DO AFTER ALL!

MAYBE... JUST *MAYBE...*

WITH A SPELL...

...LIKE *THIS...*

...MAYBE WE CAN TURN THE THING WE *COULDN'T* DO INTO SOMETHING WE *CAN!*

NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, MISTER QIFREY!

WE'RE BACK!

ばば

WHAM

ばたBUSTLE

ばたBUSTLE

ばたBUSTLE

ばたBUSTLE

ばたBUSTLE

MEET UP AGAIN TOMORROW?

ME, TOO! I'LL HEAD TO MY ROOM!

YEAH! SEE YOU THEN!

I'LL GO STRAIGHT HOME AND GIVE IT A SHOT!

WAS THAT COCO AND TARTAH, OR WAS IT A VOLLEY OF ARROWS?

THE TWO OF THEM MUST HAVE COME UP WITH AN AWFULLY GOOD IDEA.

ALL RIGHT, THEN...

I'M GOING TO CLOSE THE WINDOW-WAY NOW, MASTER!

IT WAS NICE SEEING YOU, MISTER QIFREY!

THOSE ARE THE EXPRESSIONS OF PEOPLE WHO CAN'T WAIT TO GET STARTED ON THEIR CREATION.

JUST LOOK AT THEIR FACES.

!

HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?

IT'S SIMPLE.

Thanks so much, Master!

If there's anything you need, you just let me know!

...

SHF!!

...!

SXXRRT スピー
SIZZRK

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?!

IF SHE FALLS ASLEEP AT HER DESK, THAT'S **HER** PROBLEM!

FOLD たたみ
FOLD たたみ
FOLD たたみ

WHAT AM I DOING?!

ERP!

スピョー!!
SHNOORP

WHY'S SHE FIDDLING WITH A BASIC SPELL LIKE THIS?

ISN'T SHE WAY PAST THIS STUFF?

WHAT IN THE WORLD...?

PFFFF...

PFFF...

TMP...

KTMP KTMP KTMP KTMP KTMP KTMP KTMP KTMP

I WONDER IF HE'S STILL UPSET.

I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE THINGS GOT HEATED...

ACK!

KA-

FWMP

TAR-TAAAAH!!

PHEW

YEAH. GOOD TO SEE YOU, TOO.

I'M SO HAPPY YOU'RE HERE! I WORRIED YOU'D STOPPED COMING FOR GOOD!

THIS, UH...

THIS IS A SPELL MADE JUST FOR YOU.

HUH...?

IS IT TO MAKE MY LEGS GO BACK TO HOW THEY WERE BEFORE?!

UM... NO, IT'S...

IT'S NOT ANYTHING LIKE THAT.

MAGIC ISN'T ABLE TO HEAL THE BODY.

BUT...

'CAUSE IF IT COULD...

...WHY WOULD WE STILL HAVE PEOPLE WHO ARE ILL OR INJURED?

AH...

YEAH. I GUESS NOT.

EVEN IF WE CAN'T CHANGE *YOU* TO FIT INTO THIS WORLD...

...WE CAN STILL FIND WAYS TO ADAPT THE *WORLD* TO YOU.

...TO CHANGE HOW THE WORLD REACHES MY EYES.

JUST LIKE HOW I FOUND A WAY...

YOU SHOWED ME WHAT ABOUT THIS WORLD IS PAINFUL FOR YOU.

THANKS TO THAT, I'M AWARE OF ONE MORE FACET I'D HAVE OTHERWISE NEVER NOTICED.

CHANGE THE *WORLD?*

WHY WOULD ANYONE GO TO THAT MUCH TROUBLE FOR *ME?*

BUT IT'S ALSO FOR MY OWN.

...DON'T GET ME WRONG. THIS *IS* FOR YOUR SAKE.

THAT'S WHY I'M ASKING YOU TO WORK WITH ME.

AND NOW THAT I'VE SEEN IT, I CAN'T LOOK THE OTHER WAY.

IF I LOOKED THE OTHER WAY WHEN I *KNEW* I COULD HELP, IT'D MAKE ME MISERABLE.

I WANT TO LEND YOU A HAND.

SO WILL YOU OFFER ME ONE IN RETURN?

PFFT!

LISTEN...

YOU'RE GOING IN SO MANY CIRCLES, I DON'T KNOW WHO'S HELPING WHO.

THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT PEOPLE ABLE TO HOLD OUT A HAND.

...IS BECAUSE OF HELP FROM PEOPLE LIKE DAGDA AND COCO AND YOU.

THE ONLY REASON I'M *ALIVE* RIGHT NOW...

SO IF YOU'RE TELLING ME I CAN FINALLY BE THE ONE TO OFFER IT...

I'VE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE *GETTING* HELP.

THANKS, CUSTAS.

THEN...

...MAYBE THAT MEANS *I* CAN BE SPECIAL, TOO.

TARTAH! YOU MADE IT!

AND CUSTAS, TOO!

COCO! OVER HERE!

OOP.

LURCH

TOO STEEP.

END OF THE ROAD FOR ME.

?

NO. BUT I'M *GONNA* BE.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

UM, WELL...

'CAUSE I HEAR YOU TWO ARE GONNA *MAKE* THINGS ALL RIGHT.

I MEAN... YEAH.

I'M ALL RIGHT.

YEAH.

LET'S DO THIS!

Chapter 44 ♦ End

Chapter 45

I'M THE KIND OF GUY WHO BELIEVES IN FATE.

IF YOU ASK ME, IT'S HARD TO GO ON LIVING OTHERWISE.

I'VE LIVED MY WHOLE LIFE WATCHING JERKS STARE DOWN FROM THEIR TALL TOWERS AT THE KID BORN INTO FILTH...

...KNOWING THAT NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRIED, OR HOW HARD I STRUGGLED...

...I'D NEVER MAKE IT UP TO WHERE THEY WERE.

THAT WAS THE STORY OF MY LIFE.

KRAW

POUNCE

THAT'S JUST HOW THINGS ARE.

BETTER TO ACCEPT IT...

...AND BE THANKFUL YOU'RE STILL BREATHING AT ALL.

THAT'S THE HAND FATE DEALT ME.

OR AT LEAST IT WAS.

HEY. TELL ME...

THOSE WORDS YOU SANG. ARE THEY TRUE?

...BEING THE ONES MOST ABLE TO BREAK FREE OF IT.

IS IT TRUE?

THAT STUFF ABOUT PEOPLE WHO BLAME FATE...

IT MAKES SENSE, RIGHT? YOU'VE GOTTA BELIEVE THE CHAINS OF FATE EXIST...

...IN ORDER TO HAVE SOMETHING TO GRAB ONTO AND THROW OFF.

RIGHT NOW I'M FLYIN'...

AHA-HAHA!

...WAY HIGHER THAN ANY TOWER EVER BUILT!

THIS IS GREAT!

'CAUSE LOOK, SEE?

WHAT GARBAGE.

THAT'S JUST HOW THINGS ARE?

BETTER TO ACCEPT IT?

NO, IT'S NOT.

I DON'T KNOW WHY WE DIDN'T THINK OF IT SOONER!

THE ONLY REASON WITCHES DON'T REALIZE HOW TOUGH WALKING CAN BE...

...IS BECAUSE ANYTIME THERE'S A BUMPY ROAD...

...OR RIVER WITH NO BRIDGE, THEY CAN FLY RIGHT OVER!

RIGHT, CUSTAS? MAY THE MAGIC OF *LEVITATION* ACT AS YOUR SUPPORT!

IF YOU CAN'T FIX THE ROADS, EXPAND THE POSSIBILITIES!

...BUT!!

WE DON'T HAVE THE POWER TO FIX ALL THE WORLD'S ROADS YET...

STARE AT THEM HEAD ON, AND YOU'LL FIND ENDLESS WAYS TO SOLVE THEM.

FIND THE SHAPE THE PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES AROUND YOU TAKE.

JUST LOOK...

...AND SEE.

THERE'S AN ANSWER WAITING TO BE FASHIONED.

EVERY TIME.

THIS IS THE BEST!

THANKS, COCO AND TARTAH!

THIS PROVES IT!

YOU TWO ARE THE WITCHES I WAS ALWAYS FATED TO MEET!

EASY... EASY... HUP.

UM... IT'S STILL TRYING TO FLOAT, EVEN AFTER I LAND...

OH!

WE'RE CALLING IT THE WINGCLOAK! THE FABRIC IS TREATED WITH A SPECIAL SPELL TO REPEL RAIN AND DIRT.

BUT BE CAREFUL. IF IT GETS TORN OR BURNT, THE MAGIC WON'T WORK ANYMORE.

WHEN YOU WANNA GET DOWN, USE THE WINDREEL STAVES. I MADE 'EM OUT OF THOSE EXTRA SEALCHAIR LEGS.

WOW...

THERE'S A LITTLE TRIGGER. PULL IT, AND THE WIND'LL GET REDIRECTED OUT THE ENDS. YOU CAN ALSO USE IT TO CHANGE DIRECTION IN MIDAIR!

WE FIGURE EVERYBODY EXPERIENCES THINGS A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY.

HUH?!

DOES IT FEEL ALL RIGHT? ANYTHING YOU WANT US TO CHANGE?

SO WE WERE WAITING FOR YOU TO TRY IT OUT YOURSELF...

...AND HOPING MAYBE YOU'D TELL US ABOUT ANY IMPROVEMENTS IT NEEDS.

BWOOSH

I'LL TAKE IT FOR ANOTHER SPIN TO CHECK THINGS OVER!

YOU TWO JUST HANG TIGHT!

...

SURE.

YOU GOT IT. I'LL HELP TEST IT.

EXACTLY! THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE BIRD FEATHERS.

AND THE OTHER MARKINGS? YOU MIXED THEM IN SO IT LOOKS LIKE A DESIGN?

YEAH! I FIGURED IT'S BETTER TO KEEP IT SUBTLE.

YOU HID THE LEVITATION SPELL IN THE INNER LINING. SMART.

IT'S DAGDA!

UH-OH...

HELLO, THERE!

JOLT

...!

IS THAT...?

I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF CUSTAS SOARING THROUGH THE AIR AS I MADE MY WAY.

I HEARD FROM THE DOCTORS THAT YOU'D HEADED OUTSIDE.

IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'M NOT HERE TO CHEW YOU OUT.

I WANTED TO *THANK* YOU.

HUH?

YEAH! IF ANY-THING, IT'S *SAFER* THAN WHAT WE DO! THE CLOAK WILL HELP KEEP HIM FROM FALLING ACCIDENTALLY, AND...!

FLUSTER

IT-IT'S NOT AS DANGEROUS AS IT LOOKS! HONEST!

THE TWO OF US FLY AT THAT HEIGHT ALL THE TIME!

FLUSTER

FLUSTER

I OWE YOU TWO.

YOU BROUGHT CUSTAS THE MIRACLE OF MAGIC.

I'D BEEN WORRIED ABOUT HIM. HIS SMILES... FOR A WHILE NOW, THEY'VE FELT A BIT FORCED.

I HADN'T SEEN PURE JOY IN HIS FACE FOR A LONG TIME.

AND I'VE GOT YOU TWO TO THANK FOR DRAWING IT OUT ONCE MORE.

MISTER DAGDA...

DAGDA!

VWRSH
Z

DID YOU SEE?!

WERE YOU WATCHING?!

LOOK AT HOW FREE I AM!

FREE AS A BIRD.

YEAH.

I SAW IT ALL, CUSTAS.

SKRT

SKRT

YOU'RE LIKE A WYVERN SAILING THROUGH THE OPEN SKY.

AND...
C... O...
C... O...

D... A...
G... D...
A...

T... A...
R... T...
A... H...

WHOA! THEY'RE ALL PERFECT!

YOU KEPT STUDYING ON YOUR OWN?

HEHE!

CUSTAS! YOU'VE LEARNED HOW TO WRITE?!

You know more than me now!

WHEN YOU STOPPED COMING BY THE HOSPITAL, I HAD A LOT OF FREE TIME ON MY HANDS.

カ" SKRT"

カ" SKRT"

'S'...

ｷ" SKRT

THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE WANTED TO SAY TO YOU BOTH...

'O'...

TWO 'R'S...

...AND A 'Y.'

IT WAS WRONG OF ME TO TAKE MY ANGER OUT ON YOU.

...ANY MORE THAN I DID. YOU CAME INTO THIS WORLD AS WITCHES. IT'S NOT LIKE YOU CHOSE YOUR FATE.

BUT I REALIZED SOMETHING. YOU TWO DIDN'T CHOOSE TO BE BORN THE WAY YOU ARE...

...DON'T SEEM TO RECOGNIZE IT FOR THEM-SELVES.

I GUESS IT'S ALWAYS BUGGED ME, WHEN PEOPLE WHO ARE SPECIAL...

SO... I'M SORRY!

HE TOLD ME THEY'RE GONNA BE LEAVING KALHN SOON.

NOW THAT CUSTAS CAN MOVE FREELY AGAIN...

...THEY FIGURE IT'S TIME TO RESUME THEIR TRAVELS.

DO YOU THINK MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE TAUGHT HIM MORE?

HEY, COCO...?

NOT JUST ABOUT HERBS...

...OR HOW TO READ.

TARTAH...?

A PART OF ME WONDERS...

...IF I SHOULD HAVE TAUGHT HIM HOW TO USE MAGIC.

...ABOUT HUNGER, OR COLD, OR WILD BEASTS EVER AGAIN.

HE WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY...

HE'D HAVE CLEAN WATER TO DRINK IN THE DESERT.

IF HE LEARNED HOW TO CAST, HE'D HAVE FIRE WHEN IT RAINS.

I KNOW THE PRINCIPLES ARE SUPPOSED TO BE ABSOLUTE.

AND NOT JUST WHEN HE'S ON THE ROAD.

HAVING SPELLS WOULD BENEFIT HIM FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE.

BUT I'M NOT SURE IF THEY'RE *RIGHT* ANY-MORE.

IT SEEMS TO ME...

...THAT REALLY...

...WHO ARE MOST DESERVING OF THE POWER TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

...IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO DESPERATELY NEED THE WORLD TO CHANGE...

THAT SOUNDS AN AWFUL LOT...
...LIKE THE WORDS I ONCE HEARD FROM SOMEONE VERY DIFFERENT.
"...THAT YOU MIGHT BECOME A TRUE WITCH."
"I WOULD SEE YOU UNFETTERED BY THE POINTED CAPS' PRINCIPLES..."
...WITCH...
A TRUE...

HM...? AH, THE MAGIC MARKET IN EZREST.

YOU KNOW...

THOSE TWO SAY THEY'RE HEADED TO SILVER EVE.

IT MIGHT BE NICE, SINGING A FEW TALES OF THE WITCHES' DEEDS AT THE FESTIVAL.

...YEAH. WHY NOT?

I FELT KINDA BAD, LEAVIN' WITHOUT ANY WAY TO OFFER THANKS.

WE COULD HEAD THERE, TOO.

FEWRSH

THIS IS GREAT! I CAN HARDLY WAIT!

THEN IT'S SETTLED!

BERZERK

RUSTLE

RUSTLE

RUSTLE

RUSTLE

DAGDA? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

DAGDA!!

GFF...!

WHAT'S ...?

THE LOUSY, WANNABE *MERC.*

WE FINALLY GOTCHA.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S BEEN AMBUSHING THIEVES IN THESE PARTS, STEALING THEIR LOOT FOR YOURSELF.

DOES THAT RUNT KNOW HOW YOU MAKE YOUR LIVING?

OR MAYBE YOU'RE TRYING TO PROFIT OFF HIM, TOO.

CUSTAS! FLY! GET UP WHERE THEIR ARROWS CAN'T REACH YOU!

BUT...!

HURRY!

GO! NOW!

AND DON'T COME DOWN UNTIL I TELL YOU IT'S SAFE!

BUT DAGDA ...!

GWIP

SHUTTER

A CONTRAPTION LIKE THAT'D MAKE A PRETTY COIN ON THE BLACK MARKET.

I DON'T CARE TOO MUCH FOR HANDLING WHELPS...

...BUT I S'POSE THE BOY'D FETCH A FAIR PRICE AT AUCTION, TOO.

VWOOSH

DAGDA!!

NO...!!

MASTER RESTYS. MASTER RESTYS. SHALL WE FIND A WAY AROUND?

WE HAVE COME ACROSS A SITE OF CONFLICT.

BLOOD HAS BEEN SHED.

MANY DEAD LIE BEFORE US.

WHEEZE

WHEEZE

WHEEZE

HEY...

NOT ALL WHO LAY HERE NO LONGER DRAW BREATH.

AH, BUT LOOK CLOSER, MY LITTLE ININIA!

ARE YOU ANOTHER WITCH...?

ヨロ...
STAGGER

THAT HAT.

VERY WELL. IT IS, AFTER ALL, OUR UTMOST DUTY.

PLEASE GIVE ME YOUR PERMISSION TO OFFER IT.

MASTER RESTYS. MASTER RESTYS.

IF HE IS NOT DEAD, THEN WE MUST PROVIDE AID, YES?

KRNCH

THAT IS BUT A LIE SPREAD BY THE FALSE ONES.

WHAT ABOUT THIS CAN BE *HELPED?*

YOU'RE GONNA *HELP ME?*

GWIP

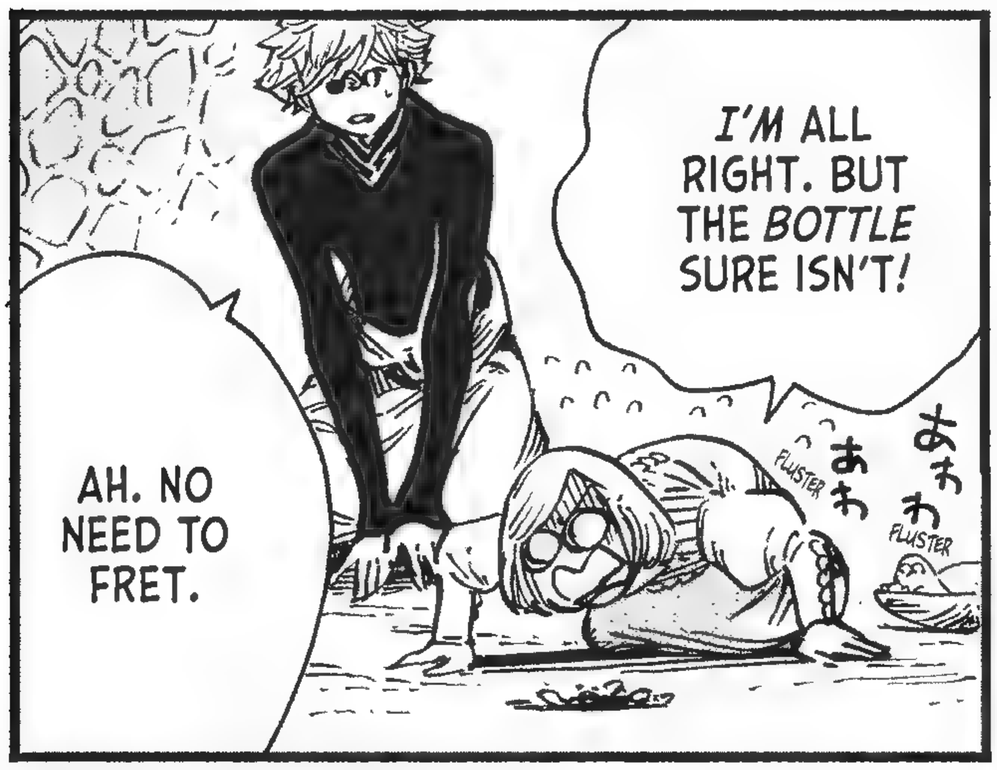
YOU WITCHES CAN'T HEAL INJURIES, RIGHT? THAT'S WHAT YOU ALL CLAIM.

KRISH!!

A WAY EXISTS, YET THEY SUPPRESS THE MEANS.

THE WITCHES THAT CHOOSE NOT TO HELP ARE THE WAYWARD ONES.

あ
AA
YOU'RE NOT HURT, I HOPE?
ふわわわ
あ
あ
AUUUGH
あ
あ
I'M SORRY! I'M SO SORRY! MY HAND SLIPPED AND THE INKPOT WENT CRASHING TO THE GROUND!


AH. NO NEED TO FRET.
I'M ALL RIGHT. BUT THE *BOTTLE* SURE ISN'T!
FLUSTER
あわ
FLUSTER
あわ

WE'LL JUST REWIND TIME FOR THE INKPOT ALONE.
SHHWW

SHWIR
ユル

KNOW THIS. IT IS THOSE WHO DON THE CAPS OF YORE...

I AM ININIA. I LABOR ON BEHALF OF MASTER RESTYS...

...A WITCH WHO OFFERS AID IN THE *FULLEST* SENSE.

...WHO ARE THE TRUE WITCHES OF OUR WORLD.

YES... AND IT SEEMS TO ME, BOY...

...THAT YOU COULD USE OUR AID AS WELL.

LET US SHOW YOU THE TRUE NATURE OF MAGIC.

'TIS A MIRACLE ABLE TO GRANT *ANY* OF THOSE WISHES...

...YOU'VE HELD IN HEART WHILE GAZING UPON NIGHTTIME STAR.

CHAPTER 43 END

Witch Hat Atelier

THEY'RE SOOOOO CUTE! WHAT ARE THEY FOR?!

OH MY GOSH! LOOK AT THESE TINY OUTFITS, ALL IN LITTLE BOXES!

Bonus Chapter

YEAH, BUT IT'S NOT JUST THE CLOTHES! THE *BOXES*, TOO! ALL THESE LITTLE SQUARES THAT I JUST WANT TO LINE UP AND KEEP ON DISPLAY FOREVER!

TINY AND ADORABLE. JUST LIKE ME.

FOCUS, COCO. BACK TO REALITY.

This is the best thing ever!

INSIDE ARE *REAL* OUTFITS THAT WERE ONCE AT THE HEIGHT OF FASHION. THEY'VE BEEN SHRUNK DOWN USING SPELLS OF REDUCTION!

THEY'RE CALLED PERIOD PIECES! IT'S A KIND OF CONTRAPTION!

ON FESTIVALS AND OTHER SPECIAL DAYS, THEY LEND THEM OUT FOR ANYONE TO ENJOY.

EVERY NOW AND AGAIN, THE GREAT HALL COLLECTS OLD GARMENTS NO LONGER IN USE...

...THEN FIXES THEM UP TO STORE AS PERIOD PIECES.

GO AHEAD AND TRY ONE, COCO. BREAK THE SEAL...

...BY PULLING APART THE LITTLE PANELS ON THE BACK.

KA しゃ

カ POP ン

ALL RIGHT, GIRLS. I WANT YOU TO GO THROUGH THESE AND PICK SOMETHING TO WEAR...

...'CAUSE SILVER EVE'S PRETTY MUCH THE MOST SPECIAL DAY THERE IS.

WOO-HOO!

MORE PRECISELY, IT RETURNED TO ITS *ORIGINAL* SIZE WHEN THE SPELL CEASED TO FUNCTION.

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING YOU LIKE, JUST BREAK THE SEAL, AND YOU CAN TRY IT ON FOR...

ERM... COCO?

WHOA!

IT GREW INTO A REAL DRESS!

PWOOMF

MY, MY. I SHOULD'VE KNOWN IT'S NOT ONLY THE DRESSES SHE'D FIND CAPTIVATING.

HEHE!

...

STARE

じ…

SILVER EVE IS ABOUT SHOWING OFF *SPELLS*, NOT OUTFITS.

I DON'T SEE THE POINT IN GETTING ALL DRESSED UP.

CLOTHES ARE CLOTHES. YOU WEAR 'EM, AND THAT'S THAT.

WHAT A WASTE OF TIME.

WELL, IT'S A—

YOU'RE *WRONG*, AGOTT!

CLOTHES **ARE** SPECIAL!

THEY'RE A KIND OF MAGIC, TOO!

THE WAY I SEE IT...

...IT'S LIKE A TRANSFORMATION SPELL. EVERY OUTFIT TURNS YOU INTO SOMETHING NEW.

JUST ONE NEW BUTTON OR RIBBON...

...AND PEOPLE SEE YOU IN A WHOLE NEW WAY.

YOU EVEN SEE *YOURSELF* IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT!

AN ORDINARY GIRL CAN BE A PRINCESS FOR A DAY...

...OR EVEN A GALLANT KNIGHT!

IT MEANS SOMETHING TO *SOMEONE*, EVEN IF NOT TO YOU.

ぎゅう SQUEEZE

SO PLEASE... DON'T CALL IT A WASTE OF TIME.

AND FOR ME...

FOR ME, IT'S A THING I REALLY, TRULY...

YOU'RE RIGHT. I'M SORRY, TETIA.

...

I GUESS, IN A WAY...

...WITH EVERY CAREFUL STITCH OF THE NEEDLE...

...AND EVERY LINE TRACED ACROSS THE FABRIC, CLOTHES ARE A BIT LIKE SEALS.

OKAY. NOW YOU'RE GOING *WAY* BEYOND WHAT I—

HEY, AGOTT!

FLINCH

ナニ…

AND SOME OF THESE PERIOD PIECES ARE *SUPER* OLD! YOU CAN EXPERIENCE HISTORY! LEARN ABOUT OLD FASHIONS! WEAR AN OUTFIT THAT'S HUNDREDS OF YEARS OLD BUT LOOKS BRAND NEW!

THERE'S A LOT GOING ON WHEN IT COMES TO CLOTHES!

Y-YEAH! EXACTLY!

WHERE IS IT? THAT'S THE ONE I WANT. I WANNA BE A *KNIGHT.*

HEY. YOU SAID THERE'S A KNIGHT'S OUTFIT?

FLIT

スッ

FLIT

スッ

COME HAVE A SEAT!

LET'S ALL CHOOSE HOW WE'LL LOOK...

...FOR OUR SPECIAL DAY TOGETHER.

...FINE.

SEVERAL CLOCK MARKS LATER...

YAY! わい

YAY! わい

Daughter of a seamstress.

THIS ONE'S REALLY UNUSUAL! THIS STITCHING ALONG HERE MUST BE WHAT MAKES IT TURN OUT THIS WAY.

THAT LAST ONE HAD EXEMPLARY EMBROIDERY WORK, BUT I CAN REALLY FEEL THE TAILOR'S *PASSION* WHEN I TAKE THIS ONE IN HAND.

WHEE!

WHEE!

Now that she's comparing it to magic, can't settle for less than perfect.

HEY, LET'S TRY THIS ONE ON, TOO!

I'M GOING 100% KNIGHT.

Loves clothes.

← Really choosy.

I GUESS IT'S NOT SO BAD...

...TRYING THIS STUFF OUT EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.

GREAT. YOU THINK ANY OF THEM ARE GONNA HAVE AN OUTFIT PICKED IN TIME FOR THE FESTIVAL?

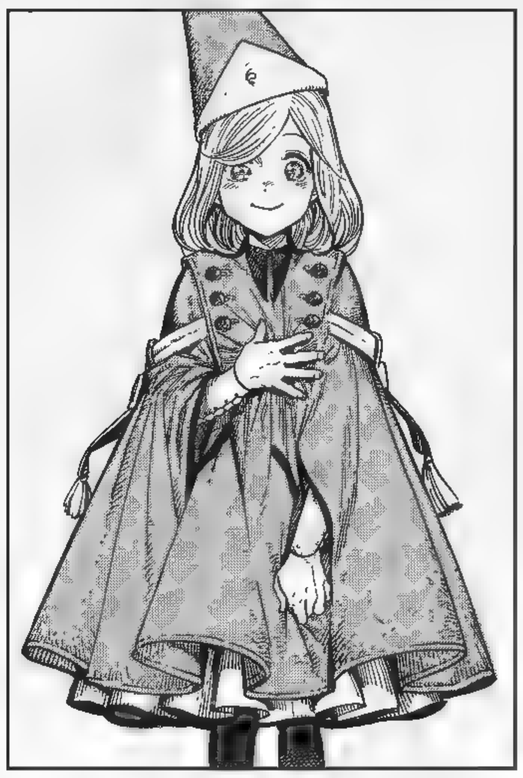
Haaah...

THE CLOAKS OF WITCH HAT

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE MANY DISTINCTIVE CLOAKS WORN BY THE WITCHES OF THIS WORLD.

| FILE.01 | QIFREY'S CLOAK

FAINT SMOKE IN COLOR, THIS CLOAK FEATURES SEVERAL GOLD DECORATIVE BUTTONS AT THE COLLAR. BECAUSE OF ITS OWNER'S AVERSION TO RAIN, ITS LINING IS INSCRIBED WITH A SPELL TO REPEL WATER.



| FILE.02 | COCO'S CLOAK

THE STYLE SHARED BY ALL OF QIFREY'S APPRENTICES, WITH A VIBRANT SEAFOAM COLOR AND BLACK COLLAR. ADORNED WITH SHANK BUTTONS COVERED IN BLACK CLOTH. THE WARM FABRIC IS PERFECT FOR COLD CLIMES, THOUGH IT HAS A TENDENCY TO ATTRACT BRUSHBUDDY FUR.

| FILE.03 | OLRUGGIO'S CLOAK

A THICK CLOAK THE COLOR OF NIGHT. SPORTS A SMOOTH, VELVETY TEXTURE THANKS TO THE VERY FINE FABRIC USED IN ITS CONSTRUCTION. THIS ALSO LENDS IT QUITE A BIT OF WEIGHT, WHICH IS THE SOURCE OF ITS OWNER'S FREQUENTLY HUNCHED BACK.

| FILE.04 | THE ORDER'S CLOAKS

FASHIONED AFTER THE SINSINGER, A MYTHICAL BIRD WITH CRIMSON PLUMAGE SAID ONLY TO APPEAR IN THE DREAMS OF THE GUILTY. HAS A LONG SLIT RUNNING DOWN THE BACK. ITS UTILITY IS ENHANCED BY SPELLS THAT SHIELD THE WEARER FROM ATTACKS.

| FILE.05 | TARTAH'S CLOAK

COLORED LIKE BUDDING LEAVES, WITH A LIGHT, FLEXIBLE FABRIC MEANT NOT TO GET IN THE WAY OF A STATIONER'S VARIED DUTIES. AS WORK PREPARING WANDS AND INK CAN OFTEN GET QUITE DIRTY, THOSE IN THIS PROFESSION TEND TO PREFER CLOAKS WITH HIGH HEMS.

Custas and Dagda have been delivered from a terrible fate by the mysterious Ininia. Yet hers is a spell cast directly upon the human form—a clear violation of the Principles. Dreadful apprehension fills the air as the curtain opens on Silver Eve, and the ironclad rules Coco and her friends have come to know start to crumble...

VOLUME 9: COMING SOON

PERFECT WORLD

Rie Aruga

A TOUCHING NEW SERIES ABOUT LOVE AND COPING WITH DISABILITY

An office party reunites Tsugumi with her high school crush Itsuki. He's realized his dream of becoming an architect, but along the way, he experienced a spinal injury that put him in a wheelchair. Now Tsugumi's rekindled feelings will butt up against prejudices she never considered — and Itsuki will have to decide if he's ready to let someone into his heart...

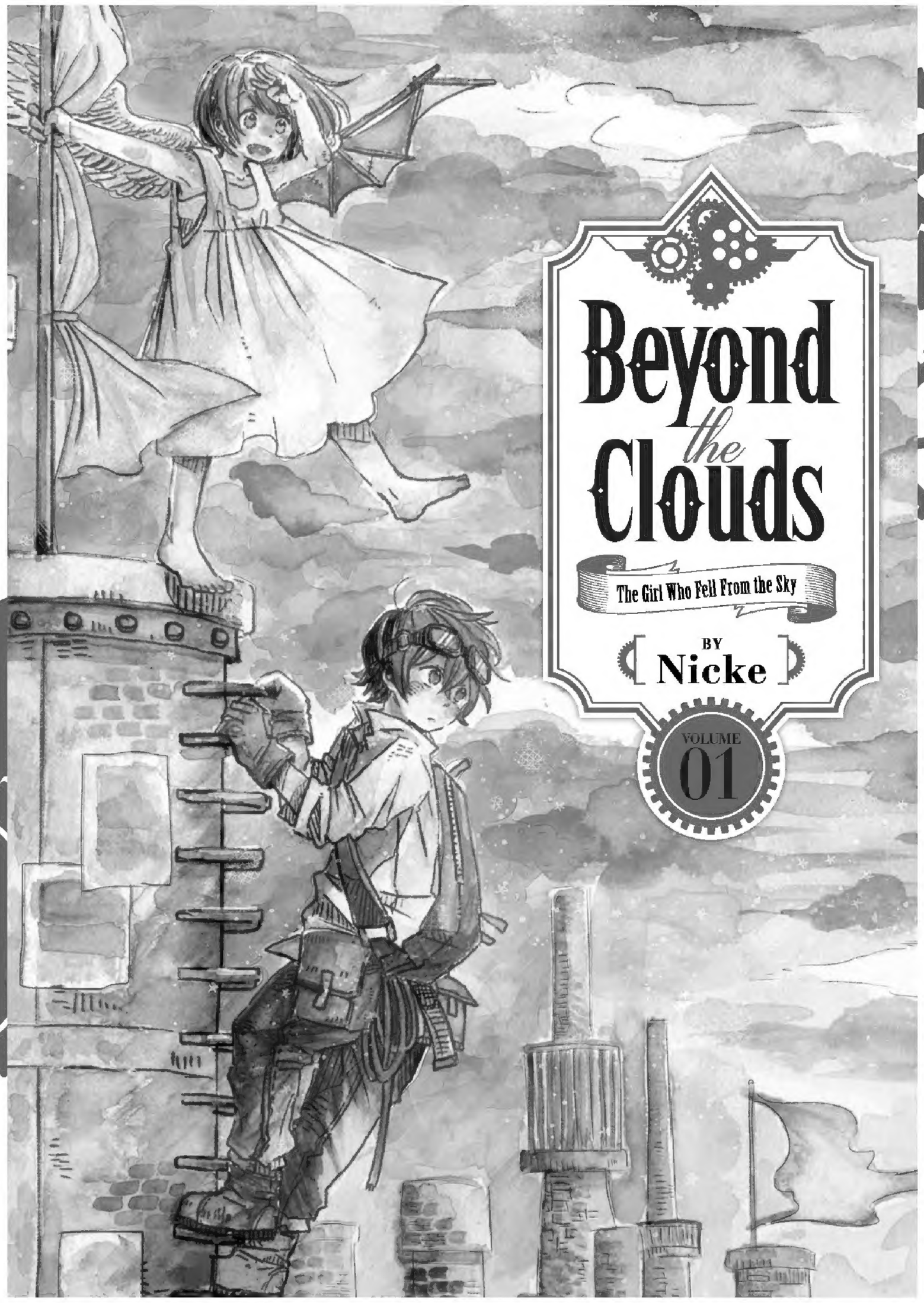
"Depicts with great delicacy and courage the difficulties some with disabilities experience getting involved in romantic relationships... Rie Aruga refuses to romanticize, pushing her heroine to face the reality of disability. She invites her readers to the same tasks of empathy, knowledge and recognition."
—Slate.fr

"An important entry [in manga romance]... The emotional core of both plot and characters indicates thoughtfulness... [Aruga's] research is readily apparent in the text and artwork, making this feel like a real story."
—Anime News Network

KC KODANSHA COMICS

Perfect World © Rie Aruga/Kodansha Ltd.

Young characters and steampunk setting, like *Howl's Moving Castle* and *Battle Angel Alita*



Beyond the Clouds © 2018 Nicke / Ki-oon

A boy with a talent for machines and a mysterious girl whose wings he's fixed will take you beyond the clouds! In the tradition of the high-flying, resonant adventure stories of Studio Ghibli comes a gorgeous tale about the longing of young hearts for adventure and friendship!

Witch Hat Atelier 8

Kodansha Digital Edition

Witch Hat Atelier 8 copyright © 2020 Kamome Shirahama
English translation copyright © 2021 Kamome Shirahama

All rights reserved.

First published in Japan in 2020 by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.
Electronic publishing rights for this English edition arranged through Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.

No portion of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the copyright holders.

English digital edition published by Kodansha USA Publishing, LLC, New York.

ISBN: 9781636994864
Digital Edition: 1.0.0

Translation: Stephen Kohler
Lettering: Lys Blakeslee
Editing: Haruko Hashimoto
Kodansha Comics edition cover design by Phil Balsman

kodansha.us

Ripping: danke-Empire